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**SHALL OUR CHILDREN
LIVE OR DIE?**

**A REPLY
TO LORD VANSITTART ON
THE GERMAN PROBLEM
by
VICTOR GOLLANCZ**

**LONDON:
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FOR
VITA AND FRANCESCA

for being so patient and quiet:

AND IN FULFILMENT OF A PLEDGE

("If it is war before these lines appear, or if it is to be war in the immediate future, the duty of the [Left Book] Club is clear. First, it must keep steadily before the public mind the real meaning and nature of fascism: it must explain . . . just what would be implied by a fascist domination of the world. Secondly, for that very reason it must support all measures genuinely making for the greatest efficiency and most complete determination in the carrying through of the conflict. Thirdly, this would be a war in which there would be many mixed motives—anti-fascist democrats would be fighting, and rightly fighting, . . . in the same ranks as anti-democratic imperialists. It would be for us to see to it that the war is and remains an anti-fascist war, and neither on the one hand compromises with fascism from imperialist motives, nor on the other turns an anti-fascist struggle into an imperialist fight à outrance. Fourthly, we should see to it that there were no trace of the wrong sort of war feeling . . . Fifthly, the war must be finished . . . on the right terms, and the curse of another Versailles be an impossibility.")—Left News, October 1938: written just before Munich).

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FOREWORD

THIS is meant to be a popular and introductory essay.

It is about winning the peace. I have always held, and hold now, if possible more strongly than ever, that winning the war is more important than winning the peace: and that, if either the one or the other had to be sacrificed, it must be, without hesitation, the second rather than the first. If I thought for a moment that Vansittartism of the less unworthy sort, or even the extreme of hatred and revenge against the German people, were necessary for winning the war, then I should keep silent, and fall back on the desperate expedient of helping to undo the evil in the moment of victory. But I am convinced that this propaganda, by compromising with the spirit of the thing it is fighting, impedes victory; for it robs our war-effort of a dynamic as powerful for good as the Nazis' is for evil, as surely as it plays into the hands of Dr. Goebbels and so weakens the growing movement of German revolt. And, even if other things were only equal, it cannot be a matter of complete indifference whether victory is to be followed by another war in five, ten, twenty, or "even" fifty years' time: or whether the whole world is to be infected with the Nazi spirit of hatred.

It should be added that I deal with the *German* problem in its European, international and world setting. That must not be taken for a moment to imply that the peoples of the conquered countries should have a smaller claim on our attention than the Germans. On the contrary: it is precisely because Poland, Czechoslovakia and the rest must never again be outraged that a really fundamental solution of the German problem is imperative.

I wish to thank my secretary, Sheila Hodges, for her devoted and so efficient help; Mr. Francis Doherty, of the Fanfare Press, whose kindness goes far beyond what any business considerations require; and most of all my wife, for a fidelity in co-operation which is more than personal.

V. G.

*Brimpton and London, .
December 15th 1941—January 24th 1942.*

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PART I

VANSITTART

CHAPTER I.—VANSITTART

The name Vansittart has become familiar.

An intensive propaganda associated with it has been in progress for a long time and is having a very considerable influence. Of the first Vansittart pamphlet, *Black Record*, nearly half a million copies are said to have been sold. This is a startling figure. We can probably infer that at least three million people have read the pamphlet: and that is a very high percentage of the adult reading public of this country. An overwhelming majority of these people have no means whatever of checking Vansittart's statements; nor have they the background of knowledge without which any critical examination of such a pamphlet is impossible. People for the most part believe what they read, provided that they are in the emotional condition which makes them want to believe it. Anyone who deliberately distorts facts, or selects facts so as to give a distorted picture of the whole, is guilty of the gravest malpractice: and anyone who, with no such intention to deceive—and I am sure Lord Vansittart is innocent of it—gives a false account of things simply because the anatomy of modern civilisation has escaped his attention, would have done better to remain silent.

It should be added that Lord Vansittart, who made a consistent stand against the appeasement of Hitler in the pre-war years, is entitled for that reason to a respect that subsequent aberrations should not be allowed to diminish.

This propaganda is by no means confined to Lord Vansittart himself. During the last few months the columns of the Conservative *Sunday Times* have been filled, week by week, with similar material: and there is little doubt that these opinions—so to call them, for they are in fact largely rationalisations of an emotional attitude—have also penetrated to a certain depth into the Labour movement. It is common knowledge that one very high official of the Labour Party is a fervid adherent of the Vansittart school, and is engaged in working out the practical measures which, in his view, should be adopted at the end of the war as the logical conclusion of Lord Vansittart's analysis.

The people who conduct this propaganda, and those who respond to it, are of many different types. Some are high-minded idealists, whose only fault is an imperfect understanding of the modern world: others are those careless men and women who always take the line of least resistance: others, again, have allowed themselves to become a prey to the primitive passions of hatred and revenge: and at the bottom of the scale are those who, semi-consciously or quite consciously, are spreading this propaganda in what they conceive to be their economic interest. In combination, people of these varied types constitute a considerable force.

In all probability, this propaganda has not so far attained a really firm hold on the great mass of the men and women of this country: but, in spite and indeed to a certain extent because of the decency of the British people, there is a real danger that, if this propaganda is not countered, and if the war is greatly prolonged, it will end by exercising a decisive influence over the emotions of the public. For that to happen would be a supreme disaster. If the war ends with our people in this mood, a decent peace will be impossible, and what may well be the last chance of saving civilisation will have been lost. It should be added that the Vansittart campaign must also have the effect of prolonging the war, and thus of adding perhaps millions to the killed, the tortured and the maimed. I was speaking only a few weeks ago to a very experienced observer who had been spending three months in occupied territories and near the frontiers of Germany. He told me that the fear of what would happen to the common people of Germany after a lost war was the most potent factor in the preservation of Hitler's power.

The importance of countering this propaganda cannot possibly, therefore, be over-estimated. I can hardly hope, in a short book, completely to convince more than a few of my readers who may have found themselves in agreement with Lord Vansittart's opinions. My object rather is, first, to show such readers that there is at least another side to the picture, in the hope that they may study the question further and form their own conclusions; and, secondly, to reinforce those who already understand the facts and are alive to the real necessities of the situation. For unless those of us who feel we do understand regard the countering of this propaganda as one of the first of personal duties, we are guilty of the gravest betrayal. If we are slack about it, if we feel that it is too much trouble to swim against the stream, then ours is the supreme guilt of standing aside while we all slide down towards a disaster which we could have helped to prevent.

The main lines of Vansittartism will be familiar. Going back to a remote period of history, Lord Vansittart tells us, in effect, that it is overwhelmingly "the Germans" who have been the curse of the world. For with the exception of a very small and ineffective minority, "the Germans" in general have always been butchers or willing acquiescers in butchery: it is always "the Germans," you are led to infer, who have been the aggressors—*Black Record*, in a review of "history" from Julius Cæsar to Hitler, makes no single mention of aggressors other than German, except for a passing reference to the Mongols of the thirteenth century: and the European wars of 1864, 1866 and 1870, the near-wars of 1905 and 1911, the war of 1914-1918, and the present war, are simply the culmination of a consistent German aggressiveness that goes back beyond the Christian era. Any differentiation between the German Government and the German people, or between Nazis and Germans, is, therefore, disastrous. "He [Hitler] is the natural and continuous product of a breed which from the dawn of history has been predatory and bellicose." It is in the innate evil of the "German" character—the character of the German people as a whole—that the world's problem is to be found.

In the last two sentences of *Black Record*, even the very small and ineffective minority of "good" Germans, previously and as if *pro forma* admitted, disappears. "On them [the British people]" says Lord Vansittart "has been laid an honour, far greater than *any German* [my italics] can ever dream, of sharing—in their still, small way—the sacrifice of Hitler's enemy, Christ."

The exact form of the conclusion that follows from all this depends on the character of the particular man that draws it. A few will talk highmindedly of the long process of spiritual regeneration which "the Germans" will have to work out for themselves: *and, divorced from the Vansittart analysis, and presented as a part of a more general and fundamental solution which follows from an analysis totally incompatible with Vansittart's*, this conclusion has, as we shall see, a great deal of truth. The majority talk in cruder language. But whatever particular form the conclusion may take, the practical, immediate proposal is always *essentially* the same: namely, that, as the one thing that matters, "the Germans" must be prevented by external force—the force of the victorious Allies—from ever again plunging the world into war. In other words, and whatever the camouflage, the "holding down" of Germany, of the German people in general—for a generation? "until they have reformed"? for ever?—is presented not merely as *the* crucial desideratum of the peace settlement, but often and increasingly as the *only* peace aim. And sometimes, in place of prevention, we get naked revenge.

"Whether you like it or not," says the 'Daily Express' menacingly—to you and me, so to speak—"vengeance on Germany is becoming the prime war aim of all Europe."* It is to be inferred that the 'Express' *does* like it. That is where we are arriving.

The proposals for the post-war settlement by Dr. Einzig, foreign editor of *The Financial News* and *The Banker*, are typical of the conclusions to which Vansittartism leads. † Dr. Einzig contends that there could be no objection on moral grounds to handing over the Germans to the Poles and "allowing" the latter to repay with interest all that they have suffered: namely mass executions, starvation, sterilisation, eviction from homes in winter, seizure of food supplies, and the organisation of German production for Polish benefit. This would have the advantage, says Dr. Einzig, of reducing the number of Germans, of whom there are far too many. But as Dr. Einzig notes with regret that "in spite of the sufferings which the British nation had to undergo in this war it will not stand for such a solution" he suggests the following as an alternative:

1. Dismember the Reich and make its former units independent.
2. Restore the ruling dynasties to these States.
3. Militarily occupy Prussia "maybe" permanently, and the other States temporarily.
4. Deindustrialise Germany.
5. Conscript a large number of German workmen to reconstruct devastations inflicted by Germany, and, when this is finished, to build fortifications in countries which she has previously attacked.
6. Employ German conscript labour permanently as unskilled labour in "the democratic countries."
7. See to it that neighbouring countries do not produce what Germany needs for her economic system: for instance, see that Rumania ceases to be an oil-producing country.
8. Arrange for Germany's vital supplies to depend on overseas trade.

As a result of such measures, Dr. Einzig justly points out, there should be a decline in the German standard of living.

* * * * *

It would be as fruitless as easy to deal, by the tit-for-tat method, with Lord Vansittart's history. You can "prove" anything by selecting some facts and suppressing others, even when you refrain from distorting some of the facts you select. Lord Vansittart, for instance, makes great play with Frederick "the

* December 4th 1941.

† Paul Einzig: *Appeasement Before, During and After the War* (London, 1941).

Great " and omits to mention Louis XIV and Napoleon " the Great " : and how many of his readers will notice the omission ? " Since the eleventh century " truly writes Lord D'Abernon, our Ambassador in Berlin from 1920 to 1926, in his Diary, *An Ambassador of Peace*,* from which I shall have occasion to quote again later, " France and England have been fighting on the same battlefields. Mostly as enemies, sometimes as Allies ; always to a certain extent rivals . . ." But every time they fought as enemies one or other of them must have been the aggressor. If I did not happen to love England, and therefore to be reluctant to attack her record while she is fighting for the life of herself and the world, I could give a list of her aggressions that would not look so well : I could even " prove " to the satisfaction of an ignoramus, by this same method of selection and suppression, that " the British " have been the greatest aggressors of history.† This would be untrue : though it is true that, as a recent British writer has pointed out, " on the whole, in the last 500 years the Germans as a people have been less aggressive than the British, but this has been largely due to special circumstances." Let everyone supply his own answer to Vansittart by the simple method of taking at random *any* text-book of European or, better, world history, whether by a conservative, liberal, or socialist historian, and reading it—for example Wells' *Outline of History*. Read it with every bit of prejudice you can bring to bear : give undue weight to any chapter or paragraph that appears to support Vansittart's case : and then, when you have finished, ask yourself whether Vansittart is talking sense or rubbish. The fact is, of course, that wars have been endemic in humanity—hardly a year in which a war was not going on somewhere—and it is only quite recently that the general moral sense of mankind has understood war for the vile and wicked thing it is.

* * * * *

Pending the study of a text-book of history, a profitable half-hour might be spent by looking at the article on war guilt (guilt for the war of 1914–1918) in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 14th edition. This was published in 1929 : and, for sociologists, the appearance of the article in that particular year—which of course means that it was actually written a little while before—

* London, 1929–1930.

† " As regards aggression " says Major-General J. F. C. Fuller in *War and Western Civilisation* " the years 1870–98 are only equalled by the age of Ghengis Khan. Between 1870 and 1900, Great Britain acquired 4,754,000 square miles of territory . . . between 1884 and 1900 France acquired 3,583,580 square miles . . . and in these same years Germany, a bad last, gained 1,026,220 square miles."

is itself a highly significant fact. For that was the time when our financiers and industrialists, having ten years before cried "Hang the Kaiser!", were finding Germany a field for very profitable investment.

The article consists of four parts. First there is an introduction by Mr. J. L. Garvin, editor of the encyclopædia, and also editor of the famous Sunday newspaper *The Observer*, which, to its honour, has had no share in the Vansittart campaign. "No universal agreement," he says, "is yet possible about the relative importance of the known facts and forces leading up to the world war. . . . The method adopted here . . . shows the various and opposite ways in which the same facts may be viewed by equally honest and thoughtful minds. . . . The Allies . . . made a far-reaching error when framing the Treaty of Versailles. In the heat of triumph and wrath, forgetting that victors in a war never can be accepted as impartial judges, they introduced into the voluminous clauses of that instrument two sweeping pronouncements." He then details Article 227—the arraignment of the Kaiser—and Article 231—the war guilt clause. *A propos* of the latter, he says: "The other Article, charging the German nation with peculiar and almost sole War Guilt (the former Habsburg empire having disappeared), was a more serious thing. It was a new and unnecessary humiliation, injecting the one-sided bitterness of war-passions into the terms of peace. This remains in Germany and Hungary a source of deep bitterness, delaying European reconciliation."

The second and third sections are by a German and a French professor of history respectively, in which they consider, each from his own angle, the problem of responsibility for the 1914 war.

Then comes, as the fourth and final section, a lengthy summing up by Mr. Garvin. After stating the Allies' opinion that "the most fatal influence of all" was German unwillingness to be firm enough with Vienna, he continues:

"But even this opinion, however definite, does not . . . imply any accusation of 'guilt', in the sense of conscious, deliberate wrongdoing against William II and his advisers; much less against the mass of the German people under the conditions of that regime. . . .

"We must all bend ourselves to realize how questions and their merits appeared at the time to others. . . . After the wars of former centuries and generations, questions of relative sin and righteousness were the theme of complicated controversies long since dead. . . ." There follows an account of how, "at an earlier period," France was generally regarded in England as a

wicked nation and Napoleon as a bad man : how the Americans thought the same about George III and the French about Pitt—"conceived as an evil manipulator of gold against the purest aspirations of humanity" : and how ordinary Germans believed that France had deliberately provoked the war of 1870 "by aggressive presumption," while ordinary Frenchmen believed that Bismarck, "with iron immorality," had lured them into war. "Again . . . we are confronted with the hundred years of religious wars springing out of the Reformation. To attempt now with regard to them a distribution of responsibilities in terms of relative guilt as between different persons, creeds and States would be ludicrous.

"From this standpoint Article 231 . . . has no moral weight nor judicial validity. The comparative error or sagacity of different Governments and systems, their degrees of worse or better judgment, remain to be weighed ; but the conception of 'Guilt', especially as implying a moral stain upon particular nations, entirely disappears. A line in Shakespeare . . . applies singularly to the psychology of nations and races in this sphere. 'There's nothing good or bad but thinking makes it so'." Burke's dictum that you cannot indict a whole people is recalled, and Hegel's, that true tragedy is a conflict, not between right and wrong, but between Right and Right. "Only the same principle . . . can explain the origins of the World War.

"Bismarck's aim was peace. He maintained it for another decade with unparalleled dexterity. . . . Yet the new German policy . . . undoubtedly meant to be not less but more honest.

"Thus the first fatal misjudgment of the Williamite regime was in a moral sense the reverse of 'Guilty' . . .

"We come to the last half-decade before the World War. To speak of 'guilt' in connection with the rival forces, inspired by irreconcilable ideas of justification, is an extreme triviality. . . . Thus a charge of peculiar 'war guilt' against any one people is null and of no effect. No individual anywhere looks on individual Germans, Magyars, Bulgarians and Turks as members of a culpable race. . . .

"The German people to-day . . . stand higher than ever in the respect of all their former opponents. Upon this movement for moral reconciliation the world's hopes depend ; for without it, armaments, however temporarily reduced, would return again."

All this is magnanimously said. The history of the article as a whole (I have quoted only a phrase or two) will not, to be sure, commend itself to everyone : for Mr. Garvin did his earlier reading at a time when the economic element was underestimated. Nor do I care for the praise of Bismarck : though he certainly did

strive for peace (for his own reasons) after 1871, he was one of the dirtiest scoundrels in history. But, whether we agree with it or not, this article, in which Mr. Garvin answers Lord Vansittart in advance far more spaciouly than I could ever do, is well worth showing to readers of *Black Record*. People tend to believe what they see in print—particularly when the work runs into twenty-four volumes.

* * * * *

Now let us get down to fundamentals.

CHAPTER II.—IMPERIALISM

The first thing on which I want to insist is that, in its ultimate origins, this is an imperialist war.

It may seem extraordinary that I should insist on that, for I spent a very considerable part of my time from the outbreak of the war to June 22nd of last year in endeavouring, by all the means in my power, to convince Left Wing men and women that the propaganda of a small minority of socialists, denouncing "the imperialist war", could, if it were allowed to influence our actions, lead to nothing but ruin. But there is in fact not an iota of inconsistency between what I said then and what I say now.

This minority used the "slogan" of "the imperialist war," not so much by way of examining its ultimate origin and so of drawing certain conclusions about how such a war might be prevented in the future, *but primarily in order to oppose the waging of the war to a decisively successful military conclusion.** From the fact that it was an imperialist war they inferred, or pretended to infer, that there was nothing to choose between the two sides: and that if the choice had to be between the victory of "Churchill" and the victory of "Hitler," which of the two should win was immaterial. They even went so far as to suggest, at various peak points of their propaganda, that we, rather than Hitler, were the aggressors. Finally, they adopted a day-by-day policy which could only have resulted, if it had been successful, in the triumph of Hitler and the enslavement of the world.

It was necessary to counter this propaganda tooth and nail.

* I am conscious that this sentence, unless explained, may produce an erroneous impression. The anti-war minority in question did not of course *want* Hitler to win. Their attitude was based partly on the position, at that time, of the Soviet Union, and partly on the disastrous idea that, by opposing their country's war effort, they could prevent the victory *both* of "Hitler" *and* of "Churchill," and could bring about "a people's peace."

For while, as I always pointed out during this controversy, the war was unquestionably imperialist in its ultimate origin—which means, as we shall see, that it arose out of the clash of competing monopoly capitalisms—this did not for a single second affect the following facts. First that, for historical reasons, we were economically on the defensive and Germany economically on the offensive: secondly that, as a result of her previous history, the German economic offensive had merged into a definite design to conquer the world, while we had no such ambitions: thirdly that, again for historical reasons, we were, in the political, social and to some extent economic senses, relatively progressive, while Germany was the very spearhead of fascism, which is the vilest form of reaction and immorality that men have ever known: and that therefore the *effect* of our victory would be to give at least a *hope* of general progress, whereas the *effect* of a Hitlerite victory must inevitably mean to fasten on the whole world, for many generations and perhaps for ever, a way of life totally incompatible with the moral aspirations of humanity. An imperialist war, yes: but one in which what were for the time being the more progressive forces were ranged against a regime which had spat upon the very idea of progress itself.

To insist, therefore, on total victory: to demand, not in place of the "people's peace" talked of by the "anti-war" minority but as the necessary preliminary to it, an immense intensification of the war effort: to oppose any tactics which would have made Hitler's task of conquest easier—these were the first necessities.

They are still the first necessities. It is still necessary to insist, and insist again, on the intensification of the war effort: it is still necessary to remember every moment of the day how priceless are those liberties—actual and, still more important, potential—which we and the world would lose if Hitler were to win. But the danger of defeatism—certainly of defeatism from the left—has, since June 22nd, passed away: all are united in their determination to beat Hitler. And now, in view of the growth of the Vansittart propaganda, we have to see to it betimes that the victory, when we win it, as we must and shall, ushers in a new era of hope and prosperity for the world. That will not happen, unless we deal with the *fundamental* causes of the world's tragedy.

* * * * *

The analysis of Imperialism,* in the modern sense of the term,

* It should be carefully noted that throughout this book the word "Imperialism" is not used vaguely to signify the conquering or ruling, wisely or otherwise, of an Empire, but in the specific sense about to be described. J. A. Hobson's *Imperialism, a Study*, published in 1902 (at the

will already be familiar to some of my readers. To those to whom it is familiar I would only say one thing : don't half forget it just because it *is* familiar : don't let it remain in the back of your minds, kept there by what may appear to be more urgent issues. On the contrary, keep it in the very forefront of your minds, because Imperialism is the contemporary shape of what has always been the basic problem of mankind—his own unbridled greed. Above all, remember that the events of 1919 to 1939, far from invalidating the theory of Imperialism, have a hundred times confirmed it.

To those who are unfamiliar with the concept of Imperialism, only a very brief and over-simplified explanation can be offered.

Capitalism is the method of production for private profit : a capitalist engages in business in order to make *for himself* (or for those extensions of himself, his wife and family) the largest possible fortune. That at least will be at once admitted. It is no doubt true that many "good" employers think of the welfare of their workers, in so far as circumstances permit, and that others engage in business for idealistic reasons : but the motive power of capitalism *taken as a whole* is what is politely called private profit, but what would be better and more honestly described as personal greed. Many, of course, start up in business to make not a fortune but a living ; but because profit-making is the essence, the whole meaning, of capitalism, the urge to make bigger and bigger profits always supervenes. If for whatever reason a capitalist restrains this urge, he is, *as a capitalist* and by just so much as he restrains it, a failure : if capitalists in general restrained it, they would no longer be capitalists—capitalism would no longer be capitalism, would cease to exist. Nor is it only the capitalist who is motivated by self-interest ; the workers also struggle for the highest possible wages. That is the way we all at present live. Nothing that follows should be taken as implying that capitalists are, in any special sense, immoral.

In order to make the maximum profit, the capitalist must buy as cheaply, and sell as dearly, as he possibly can : and the most important and costly of the things he has to buy is human labour. It follows that he must buy this also as cheaply as possible : and this means, as a little thought will show, that capitalists as a whole must hand out to the working class as a whole a minimum

beginning of the imperialist epoch) first popularised this use of the term : this book was followed by H. N. Brailsford's prophetic *War of Steel and Gold* early in 1914 and by *Lenin's Imperialism* in 1917 (written in 1916). Since 1914, at least, the word "Imperialism" has been used in this sense throughout the socialist, and particularly the continental socialist, movement.

share of the goods produced. But in an industrial country the workers, and in all countries the workers and peasants or agricultural labourers, form the greatest percentage of the population : and as to agriculture, a rising capitalism inevitably neglects it, for it is less profitable than business. The result of all this is that on the one hand the people as a whole do not receive enough money to buy all the consumption goods—goods for everyday use, as opposed to the machines that make them—that the capitalists as a whole produce, and that on the other hand the capitalists begin to accumulate profits. When the capitalist accumulates profits he does not as a rule spend them on riotous living : he is not normally that sort of man, and in any case he accumulates too much to spend in that way. Being a capitalist, and being susceptible to the standards of capitalist society, he desires two things, which are really aspects of the same thing : he desires a sense of power, and an unbroken spiral of higher profits, bigger capital, higher profits again from the bigger capital, a still bigger capital, and so on. He therefore goes on accumulating, and casts about for the best way of employing the new capital. A point arrives when he cannot employ it to his full satisfaction in his own country, for two reasons : first, the population in general has not received sufficient money to buy all the consumption goods that can be produced : secondly, if he puts all his new capital into “ production ” goods—*i.e.*, the machines which make the consumption goods—this is no use to him if people are not going to be able to buy the consumption goods that result.

Reflection will show that the case is not met by “ international trade ” as ordinarily understood. For if the industrial and agricultural workers of a country, *considered as a unit*, cannot absorb the products of that country, then as the world becomes more unified the industrial and agricultural workers of all similar countries, considered as a single unit, cannot absorb the products of all those countries, considered also as a single unit.

If, therefore, they rely on the old methods, the capitalists will find that the rate of interest on their bigger capital—the percentage of profit “ earned ” say by every pound—is falling ; and that is a disaster which, in the nature of the case, a capitalist must always do everything in his power to prevent.

And so the capitalist finds a new method of employing his capital profitably ; he employs it in more or less undeveloped regions of the world, where capital is scarce, wages low, and land and raw materials cheap. In this way he not only maintains but increases his rate of profit. He “ exports ” his capital.

* * * * *

In the meantime three further processes have been developing.

As industry has been growing by its own momentum and by the application of scientific discoveries, cut-throat competition between capitalists in a particular group, and then between capitalists of allied groups, has been progressively eliminated: huge cartels, trusts and combines, "vertical" and "horizontal," national and international, have grown up: monopoly has appeared. Profits have thereby been enormously increased, because such trusts are in a position (among other things) to buy cheaper and sell dearer, owing to the cutting out of competition. Hence further huge accumulations of capital, concentrated in a few hands. Secondly, one specially important form of business—banking—has itself become trustified: and because the huge operations necessary for success in the era of growing monopoly can be conducted only on a basis of credit, the banking trusts have exercised increasing power over the industrial trusts, until at last financial and industrial capital has largely coalesced into what is called "finance capital." The director of the bank becomes a director of the steel company, and vice versa. Finally, these immensely powerful groups of industrialists, bankers, and finance capitalists have been establishing a more intimate relationship with the Government of their country, and have been able to employ their Government's diplomatic and military resources for the conquest, open or concealed, of territories to exploit, and for the preservation of territories already conquered: and have been able, too, to dictate rapprochements, "undertakings" and alliances with other Powers, now with A against B and now with B against A, for the single-minded purpose of strengthening their hand, as circumstances might dictate, in a changing world. Thus Schilder, quoted by Lenin,* divides the history of Great Britain's foreign policy from 1870 to 1914 into four periods: first, the Asiatic period in which the struggle was against Russia's advance towards India; second, the African period (about 1885 to 1902) in which the struggle was with France over the partition of Africa—war very nearly broke out over the Fashoda affair in 1898; third, the second Asiatic period of our treaty with Japan against Russia; and fourth, the "European" period which culminated in the alliance of Britain, France, and Russia in view of the threat from Germany.

Not only have these millionaire "concerns" been forging closer links with their Government: frequently they in effect *are* their Government. The ex-chairman of a great industrial trust becomes Prime Minister: the ex-banker goes on a mission to the Sudetenland.

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Turning its eyes abroad, capital, monopoly capital, and finance capital see tempting possibilities of various kinds. (i) The line of least resistance is the acquisition of colonies proper—territories unoccupied except by “natives”—in which complete political control may be combined with undisputed exploitation: undisputed, that is to say, for the time being. (ii) Then there are State loans from one country to another, with a huge rake-off for the banks, and involving a close political tie-up: the pre-1914 loans by France to Russia are typical. Lenin, following the Bible, calls this usury. In such cases there is sometimes direct political control by the creditor country in the interests of the bondholders. (iii) Of another type is the struggle for the exploitation of sovereign or semi-sovereign States which are undeveloped or in decline—such as, before 1914, the Argentine, Brazil, China, Persia, Turkey, Morocco, the Balkans, etc., etc. It is here that finance capital is at its most characteristic. A Great Power lends money, at a high rate of interest to, say, a bankrupt or ambitious ruler: profit number one. But it is a condition of the loan that part of it shall be spent on the ordering of railway lines from the creditor country: profit number two. It is a further condition that a company of the creditor country shall construct, or supervise the construction of, the railway itself: profit number three. And in the background are the army and navy of the creditor country, ready to “keep the [other] foreigner out.” As Brailsford has pointed out in his brilliant *War of Steel and Gold*, the opening sentence of Lord Cromer’s *Modern Egypt* is this: “The origin of the Egyptian question in its present phase was financial.” (iv) Finally, there is the temptation to exploit the resources to be found in the metropolitan territory of another Great Power. Referring to the French occupation of the Ruhr in 1923, Thyssen, in his *I Paid Hitler*,* quotes a section chief in the foreign ministry of which Briand was head, as saying “During the war [of 1914–1918] the Germans wanted to destroy France in order to get hold of its mineral deposits. During the Ruhr occupation it was France which wanted to destroy Germany in order to get its coal.” Thyssen adds with reference to both sentences—and who could speak with better authority?—“That was true.” Here we see the equivalent, at what is called “the higher stage” of monopoly capitalism, of the rapacity for land of feudal wars.

The ultimate logic of the whole process is to be seen at the present moment, when Hitlerite Germany is endeavouring to turn first all Europe and then the whole world into an exploited “semi-colony.”

* London, 1941.

Lenin, as a matter of fact, foresaw Hitler's European policy. "Imperialist rivalry and the struggle between these countries" he wrote in 1916 "have become very keen because Germany has only an insignificant area and few colonies; *the creation of 'Central Europe' is still a matter for the future, and it is being born in the midst of desperate struggles* [my italics]. For the moment the distinctive feature of all Europe is political disintegration."*

* * * * *

The year 1900 marks a turning-point in the process we have been describing. For (1) vast quantities of surplus capital had accumulated in the hands of a few Great Powers, (2) the final stage of trustification (into monopoly capital in general and finance capital in particular) was beginning, (3) there were virtually no more unoccupied territories that could be seized as colonies. In 1876 10·8 per cent. of Africa, and 56·8 per cent. of Polynesia, had belonged to the colonial powers; in 1900, 90·4 and 98·9 per cent. respectively. England had had 2·5 millions of square miles of colonial possessions in 1860: 7·7 in 1880: and 11·6 in 1899. France had had 0·2 in 1860, 0·7 in 1880, and 3·7 in 1899. Germany had had none in 1860 or 1880, and 1·0 in 1899.† Henceforth, therefore, the struggle must be either for the re-division of existing colonies, or for the "development" of independent or semi-independent States by rival Great Powers: and the fact that the world had been finally divided up just at the moment when a huge surplus of capital was lying idle and monopolisation was entering on its last phase, inevitably meant that the struggle would be an exceedingly bitter one. It is the century which opened with the year 1900 that we call the epoch of Imperialism.

CHAPTER III.—IMPERIALISM AND WAR

Now, it is as clear as the day that while this process is going on—before, that is to say, the point of full Imperialism is reached—there is constant risk of war. For what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. The capitalists of one country, supported by their government, want to seize or exploit in one form or another a particular piece of territory: the capitalists of another country may want the same piece of territory: and if they both want it greedily enough, war will result—war, that is to say,

* *Op. cit.*

† Lenin, *op. cit.*

between the competing "Great Powers," not merely war against "the natives," which is common form. But if there is a risk of war while the process is yet uncompleted, there is a far greater risk when the world has been divided up, and full Imperialism is in being. For now there can no longer be arrangements, tacit or avowed, that you may go here if you will allow me to go there: A, looking about for territory to exploit, finds that only territory already held by B or C is available: and B or C will certainly not give it up without a struggle. *As from 1900, therefore, great world wars became not indeed inevitable, but to be prevented only by a deliberate and total change in the system, national and international, of the production of commodities.*

Moreover, as finance capitalism develops from the stage of 1900 to the stage of 1939, still another factor intervenes. Increasingly unable to equate consumption with production, a younger, "unsatisfied" Imperialism turns its attention more and more to the production of armaments. There is a twofold advantage here. First, armaments don't have to be "consumed": the Government of the country provides an immediate, sure, and very profitable market, and pays the armament manufacturers—i.e., the finance capitalists—out of taxation levied on the whole body of the people. Secondly, the armaments will be there to be used for the conquest of markets. And armaments, in the nature of things, eventually *are* used; and if one country builds up its armaments, so does another. A clash becomes still more inevitable.

From 1933 to 1939 finance-capitalism in Germany was rapidly passing into armaments-finance-capitalism.

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There is always a danger that those who are unfamiliar with a particular analysis may imagine that it is an ingenious or possibly malicious fancy of the writer, rather than a plain description based on irrefutable facts. (This danger has been increased by the citing of Lenin, which may cause the whole matter to be dismissed as a communist plot: though it was in fact two great Englishmen, the late J. A. Hobson and H. N. Brailsford, who did much of the pioneer work on Imperialism.) I should like, therefore, to quote three statements—one by a Frenchman and two by Englishmen, all three of them men of unimpeachable respectability. They describe the process quite explicitly; and be it noted that they do so, not by way of apology, but as a matter for extreme satisfaction and self-congratulation.

Jules Ferry, defending French colonial expansion in the

* If this phrase is not clear, it will become so in Chapter IV.

Chamber of Deputies in 1885, said : " It was a question of having outlets for our industries, exports, and capital. That was an absolute necessity ; that was why France had to expand in West Africa, on the Congo, in Madagascar."

That is all very fine and large, except possibly for " the natives." But if another country happens to feel the same " absolute necessity " : if another country happens to feel that it also " has to expand " in West Africa, on the Congo, in Madagascar—then a clash is inevitable.

Joseph Chamberlain, Secretary of State for the Colonies (and incidentally father of Neville Chamberlain), boasted in 1896 as follows : " All the great offices of State are occupied with commercial affairs. The Foreign Office and the Colonial Office are chiefly engaged in finding new markets and in defending old ones. The War Office and the Admiralty are mostly occupied in preparations for the defence of these markets and for the protection of our commerce."

Note that it is the *Foreign Office* and the *Colonial Office* that are engaged in finding new markets, etc.—not the Board of Trade : and note also that it is the *War Office* and the *Admiralty* that are mostly occupied in preparations, etc., etc.

And finally, Mr. Lloyd George is reported in Riddell's *Intimate Diary of the Peace Conference and after* to have said : " The truth is that we have got our way. We have got most of the things we set out to get . . . The German navy has been handed over, the German merchant shipping has been handed over, and the German colonies have been given up. One of our chief trade competitors has been most seriously crippled, and our Allies are about to become her biggest creditors. That is no small achievement."

No small achievement indeed : the present war is partly due to it.

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I do not wish to be misunderstood : I am not putting forward the " economic " view of war, for I believe it to be false. I would call it rather the " power " view. The origin of *all* wars is to be found in the lust for power or the urge of self-interest. Or it is perhaps better called the " moral " view : for it is in man's general inability to control his lust for power, his urge of self-interest, in any but his more intimate relationships, that the disaster lies. Unless he learns to control it, he is doomed.

But in the imperialist era which opened with 1900, the narrower economic motive—the drive for profits by competing capitalisms—assumes broadly over the international scene as a whole the *leadership* of all the power and self-regarding urges, of which it is

merely one. Or, to put it in the most negative way : the drive for profits of competing capitalisms is a general poison that infects the international body, and not only itself and directly makes the preservation of health, which is to say of international peace, impossible, but also gives activity and virulence to special poisons which otherwise might have lain dormant or been controlled. For other forms of the power and self-regarding urges remain over from the past—some of them, indeed, in heightened form—for instance, old dynastic and feudal elements, nationalism, militarism, etc. : they have different strengths in different countries and at different times : *but it is within the setting of Imperialism, which is always driving to great international wars, that they operate and find their chance to work irreparable evil.*

It is this general imperialist setting that we speak of when we say that a war is imperialist : we do not mean that the economic motive is necessarily the immediate cause of a particular war, still less that it is the immediate cause of a particular phase in a particular war.

In the course of his criticism in the House of Commons (November 27th 1941) of the I.L.P. speeches on the Address Mr. Harry Strauss, the Conservative M.P., asked whether members of the I.L.P. really believed that Germany's invasion of Russia was caused by the present economic system of "commercial and financial rivalry and exploitation." Well, I seem to remember a speech by Hitler, not very long before the war, in which he said something like this : "If only Germany had the rich corn land of the Ukraine and the oil of the Caucasus, how happy she would be !". But Mr. Strauss totally misunderstands the argument, which can be put as follows :

1. History is a continuous process.
2. The world-war scares of 1905 and 1911, and the world wars of 1914 and 1939, inexorably followed one from the other—they are landmarks in the imperialist history of the twentieth century.
3. The characteristic and broadly determining conditions of this period, which we call imperialist, are the rivalries, aggressive or defensive, of competitive monopoly capitalisms.
4. These conditions are the *occasion* for world war.
5. It is in these conditions that Hitlerism got the power to launch the present war. Hitlerism represents an alliance of older power urges, themselves distorted and heightened by the imperialist settlement of 1918 and the imperialist history of 1918 to 1939—an alliance of these urges with the specific forces of monopoly capitalism. If from 1850 the world's economy had

developed on fraternally planned instead of on monopoly capitalist lines, Hitlerism would have been impossible.

The argument has been misunderstood if it is thought necessarily to imply that Germany's policy is at the moment controlled by her industrialists, or that its main motive is at the moment capitalist profit. This may or may not be so. My own view is that, on the whole, Hitler now effectively controls policy, and that his motive is a desire to conquer the world (which coincides with the industrialists' desire to exploit it) and to remake all men in his own degraded image. Some socialists, in their reaction against the "great man" view of history, absurdly underestimate the often decisive influence of the "great" and infamous. It is repulsively mechanical to suggest that if Napoleon or Lenin had never been born history would have been unchanged, for some other Lenin or some other Napoleon would have arisen to do their "historically inevitable" work. On the contrary, the fact that Napoleon was the greatest soldier of his time and Lenin the greatest political strategist of all time, that both were men of iron will and inflexible purpose, and that they lived when they did, gave a direction to existing world forces which otherwise might have been very different. But it must equally be insisted, both that it was the historical forces of the contemporary world that combined with their innate characteristics to make these men what they were, and that it was only in the setting of these forces that they could act, only these forces themselves to which they could give direction. And so with Hitler. Apart altogether from the fact that it was the industrialists who financed him for their own ends, the *causa causans* alike of his personal development and of his power has been the general imperialist history of 1900 to 1939, as including the modern history of Germany, and as against the background of her previous history: and it was only in this imperialist world that he could operate. Specifically and directly, and as will appear later and particularly in Chapter VIII, it was French, British, and American Imperialism in 1918 to 1939, as well as German and general world Imperialism during the same period, that brought the industrialist-Nazi-militarist complex to power in 1933 and then consolidated it for 1939. This war is, indeed, essentially not less imperialist in origin than the last but more so: and that is natural, for by the nature of Imperialism its tension must always increase. The vital difference between the two imperialist wars is that now one of the belligerents is determined completely to incorporate with itself, and Nazify, the whole territory of the other—indeed, the whole world—whereas in the previous war neither side had any such ambition. That ambition is itself, in large part, a product of Imperialism at a

still later stage than 1914, for as it grows and develops finance capital must have the very maximum area to exploit.

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What does all this mean ? It means that :

1. In considering the future, for more important than any special responsibility for the present war is the general responsibility of world capitalism.

2. If we concentrate our minds on the special German responsibility and special German problem, we are failing to see the wood for the trees.

3. The solution of the general world problem is the *simultaneous condition* for the solution of the special German problem.

4. The only permanent solution for the havoc wrought by the self-regarding competition for profits of monopoly capitalists is *to abolish this competition and the power of capitalists to pursue it, and to substitute a system of international planning, not for the profit of individuals, but in the equal interests of the common people everywhere.* In other words, the only permanent solution is international socialism. The cat is out of the bag.

* * * * *

Does the mere word socialism frighten the reader who is a non-socialist or may even have imagined himself to be an anti-socialist ? If so, don't be frightened by a *word*, which it is good to retain if only because round it, as round a banner, have rallied so many of the most selfless and devoted fighters, utterly obscure as well as famous, for human emancipation. Those directly interested in opposing socialism (mostly the rich who, infinitesimally few as they are in comparison with the teeming millions of the world, would certainly lose their wealth by the introduction of socialism, but would as certainly gain in power to serve their fellows) have contrived to turn the word into a bogey : but consider, not the word, but the sanity, health, and plain commonsense for which it stands. Nor imagine for a moment that international socialism is inconsistent with true patriotism. It is inconsistent, of course, with "my country right or wrong" ; but what adult person really believes that one should abet the wickedness of one "country" in its relations with another "country"—which means the wickedness of some individuals in their relations with other individuals, for there is nothing *but* individuals, "public" acts are a mythical abstraction—merely because the evil-doers are "one's own" ? International socialism is inconsistent, too, with grab and greed for "one's own" (which sometimes, but by no means always, is

to say one's own capitalists) at the expense of "others." But far from being inconsistent with love of one's country, to be a socialist means to love her, and her soil and her life and her traditions, with a peculiar intensity, for the socialist desires that his country should develop her best qualities to their highest point, and should use them for the benefit of men and women everywhere.

To socialist readers to whom all that has so far been written is common form I would say this: Do we believe it passionately enough? Do we strive ceaselessly enough to bring into being the international socialist order without which there can be no solution? Do we realise the terrible responsibility that rests upon those of us who, in all humility, believe that we understand the machinery of the modern world? I fear we cannot answer with a confident affirmative. Socialism is already an old faith: and many of us are tired, and others have been so sorely disillusioned by the defeats they have suffered at the hand of stronger forces that they have even begun to wonder whether the socialist message is, after all, the true message. It is true: the only thing that is wrong is our own tiredness, our loss of the burning faith and piercing vision which inspired those who blazed the trail. We cannot hope to win until we put into our socialist faith all the passion, and more, that the reactionaries put into their hatred for our German brothers.

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It would, however, be less than honest for me to pretend that, as I thought when I was a younger and a happier man, the establishment of international socialism will of itself produce the New Jerusalem. Whether we believe in original sin or whether we believe in Freud, we must face the fact that this urge for power, this call of self-interest, is an ancestral heritage from which only by a supreme effort can mankind escape. Expel it with a pitchfork and, unless we strive and struggle, it will always come running back. The supersession of capitalism by socialism is, negatively, the condition for our freedom from selfishness and egoism: for capitalism encourages greed, reinforces it, consecrates it, makes it the norm of human behaviour. And not only so: the practice of socialism will positively strengthen the other-regarding impulses of humanity, provided that, within the larger structure, there is the widest possible network of smaller bodies in which the citizens democratically co-operate for specific ends, and provided, also, that there is an educational system which really does educate for democracy. But over and above all this something more is required: if selfishness is to be controlled, men and women must be associated for another purpose—for the

preservation and development of what, if the shorthand will be permitted, may be called the Christian tradition. For my own part, I look forward to the linking up, for this end, of a Church no longer divorced from politics, with humanists or stoics who accept the Christian ethic but not the Christian dogma. What hinders such co-operation? The sanction for conduct is different: the conduct valued is the same. For the Christian, the sanction for right-doing is the existence and nature of God. For the modern stoic, to do right, without hope of any reward, either now or in a hereafter: to do right, while even unable to give to "right" itself, as religion and philosophy can, an absolute meaning: by and in that alone do we ourselves become absolute, and by and in it alone do we win a reward of which neither changing circumstances nor utter annihilation can ever rob us.

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In passing I have alluded to "the special German problem." I am coming to that in a moment: but meanwhile it is worth pointing out that we have already, so to speak, *negatively* considered it: we have by implication suggested certain ways in which we must *not* deal with it.

International socialism is *international* socialism. National socialism is a term as meaningless in its connotation as it is loathsome in the historic associations which have gathered round it. But international socialism means international fraternity: the brotherhood of the common people everywhere. You cannot have brotherhood without equal freedom. On the political side, therefore, any "holding down" of Germany is incompatible with the socialist solution. If we attempt it, the disease of unfreedom in the heart of Europe will corrupt the whole international body. As we shall see, one of the elements in the special German problem is precisely how to make freedom effective internally in Germany: to hold the German people down from outside is simply to aggravate this problem.

On its economic side, international socialism means international planning. Now the Germans are among the most industrious, methodical and technically clever people in the world—even Lord Vansittart would not deny that. Unless you treat them as equal partners, any genuine international planning is impossible. Our sole aim must be so to combine the individual productive strands that the richest international garment may be woven. Discrimination against one of the greatest of industrial peoples, for whatever reason it may be undertaken, must necessarily defeat this aim.

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And now we come to the special German problem. For there is one : and not the least of the dangers of the Vansittart propaganda is that it makes decent people, in their reaction against this propaganda, deny that a special German problem exists at all. Such a denial is futile, and incompatible with that honest facing of all the facts without which a permanent solution of international problems is impossible.

CHAPTER IV.—THE GERMAN PROBLEM—I

Apart from any question of the character of individuals or the character of the German regime (which must be considered later), an historical fact, for which no single German is responsible, made her, progressively in the years leading up to the imperialist era of the twentieth century, and particularly in that era, *a specially explosive force*. This fact is what is described as "the uneven development of capitalism" : which simply means, what is a matter of common sense, that in the capitalist epoch different countries develop capitalistically at different speeds.

Now Germany arrived very late on the modern industrial scene : her progress had been retarded by a number of causes, of which only three need be mentioned. First, the rising national States—especially, for our purposes, Britain and France—were able to exploit to the full the rich new opportunities afforded by the discovery of America : whereas Germany, broken up into hundreds of principalities, with her towns either subjugated by the princes or the scenes of endless warfare, and with no hinterland to the Hansa, was quite unable to compete successfully. Secondly, the terrible devastation wrought in the heart of Europe by the Thirty Years' War which ended in 1648 (and whether or not, as many modern historians consider, its extent and importance have been exaggerated) hindered in Germany the development of the factory system which was already springing up in Western Europe. By Lord Vansittart's method of selection, "the French" might be held responsible for this horror : "Corpses were cut down from the gibbets," says a writer in the *Times Literary Supplement* of November 29th 1941, "or grubbed from the graveyards to serve as human food. In France two high-minded politicians had decided that the war must and should continue—so long as its continuance exalted the power of the Bourbons and tended to undermine the house of Hapsburg." Finally, and as we approach our own times, Germany did not get the unified national State, which is a condition of modern industrialism, until 1871.

So Germany arrived late : but when she did arrive as a modern industrial nation she forged ahead with terrific rapidity, owing to the energy of her people and the natural resources of the country. But this happened in the last third of the last century and at the beginning of this—at a time when “ free ” capitalism was developing into monopoly capitalism, finance capitalism, and Imperialism, and when, as part of this process, the remaining regions of the world still available for imperialist exploitation were coming into the possession, or becoming spheres of influence, of the older industrial Powers. Look again at the figures of colonial possessions for 1860, 1876, 1880, and 1900 ;* and then consider the other side of the picture—the relative rates of progress of three crucial basic industries in the older and newer industrial countries respectively. For 1880, 1900, and 1913, these are the figures. *Coal output in million tons* : Great Britain 149, 228·8, 292 ; Germany 47, 109·3, 190·1. *Pig iron output in million tons* : Great Britain 7·7, 9, 10·3 ; Germany 2·5, 7·5, 19·3. *Steel output in million tons* : Great Britain 1·3, 4·9, 7·7 ; Germany 0·7, 6·4, 18·9.† In a word, Germany came on the world scene, with all the push and energy of youth, just at the moment when the division of the world was being completed : her international position, her *means* to exploit, became less and less commensurate with her ever-growing *power* to exploit. This is not said by way of apology for exploitation, which, as we have seen, is the poisonous root of the whole evil : it must be utterly cut out everywhere : and, better man though he is than some of his critics, that type of pacifist who imagines we can solve the international problem by “ appeasing ” Hitler with more “ places in the sun ” is the most dangerous of myopics. But imperialist exploitation was the *rule* of the industrial Powers in the period we are considering : and again, what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander.

Let us consider for a moment, in this connection, the Morocco crisis of 1905—which might have caused, and very nearly did cause, the war of 1914, if the Irishism may be permitted. Lord Vansittart writes : “ Well, by hook and by crook—especially crook—the butcher-bird got three wars before 1914. Then, in 1905, it nearly got another war . . . ” What Vansittart is saying is that the Kaiser’s landing at Tangier in 1905 was another of those unilateral aggressions by which Germany deliberately attempted to plunge an innocent world into ruin.

Every year is, in the nature of things, preceded by another

* See page 18.

† Varga and Mendelsohn, *New Data for Lenin’s “ Imperialism ”* (London, n.d.).

year : and 1905 was preceded by 1904. The Kaiser landed at Tangier in 1905 : but in 1904 an agreement had been signed between Britain and France, the essence of which was to give France a free hand for the exploitation of Morocco, in return for France giving us a free hand for the exploitation of Egypt. Morocco, as it happened, was one of the three African territories still lying more or less virgin for exploitation : the other two being the little state of Liberia and the Abyssinia which Mussolini duly outraged thirty years later. And so young industrial "Germany"—in this instance chiefly the Mannesmann iron ore interests—saw old industrial Britain and France increasing their hold on one of the few remaining "places in the sun" for millionaires, bankers and heavy industrialists. The whole affair was one of iron ore, loans, harbours, and commercial and financial exploitation generally—equally sordid on all sides, equally remote from the interests of the common people. If you doubt what I have said, read through the article on modern German history in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, until you come to the part of it dealing with the Morocco crisis. Ah, but someone may smell a rat : for if you look at the initials at the end of the article, you will find that it was written by a German professor of history. Mr. J. L. Garvin, the editor of the encyclopædia, must have been nodding. Very well : read the article on Morocco itself, which is not written by a German professor of history, or a German at all, but by a Frenchman. He says : "During the Algeiras negotiations [which followed the Tangier episode] . . . she [Germany] obtained from Abd-ul-Aziz the concession of the building of the port of Tangier, which had already been promised to a French company, and a loan of 10 million marks with a Berlin bank, in violation of an engagement taken with the French banks at the time of a loan contracted with them in 1904." It may be added that on the loan in question, which was of 62·5 million francs, the French banks had made a profit of 18·75 per cent.

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If 1914 arose out of an imperialist situation characterised by the greater relative development of German capitalism and the lesser relative development of British and French capitalism in a world divided up, it must be clear that this situation was aggravated to an extreme degree by the imperialist "settlement" of 1919. Arguments as to whether the Versailles Treaty was progressive, because it recognised the claims of nationality : as to whether Germany would have imposed worse terms—she almost certainly would : as to whether the League of Nations was intended as a genuine step towards the abolition of power politics—Wilson unquestionably meant it to be such, while Clemenceau

was no less unquestionably determined to use it as an instrument of power politics ; all such arguments are stupid and futile. The simple fact is that the good features of Versailles were totally irrelevant, in that they had nothing whatever to do with the essential, determining, reality of the international situation : while the terms imposed on Germany herself, all psychological considerations apart, could have no other effect than to *increase* the danger of German explosiveness, by making her *means* to exploit still less commensurate with her *power* to exploit—a power which could never have been artificially held down for long, even if our own reactionaries and finance capitalists had not very soon thought fit, for their own purposes, deliberately to encourage her revival. If the general argument previously set out has been accepted, Mr. Lloyd George's remark, already quoted,* will be seen to supply one of the basic clues to an understanding of 1919-1939.

To conclude this chapter : within the general imperialist set-up, the *very existence of Germany* as a specially explosive force was the active principle, the dynamite, the *special* cause of the twentieth century war-scars and wars. I say with emphasis that "*the very existence of Germany . . . was the special cause,*" rather than that "Germany caused," for two reasons. First, because "Germany" certainly did not, in the deliberate and immediate sense, launch the war of 1914 : the Kaiser's government had its fair share of war guilt, as understood in this deliberate and immediate sense, but so had others—ourselves, happily, in my opinion, least of all. ("Germany" did, of course, deliberately launch the war of 1939 : but, as should already be clear and will become clearer, the fact that she was specially explosive for the reasons given is as relevant to an understanding of 1939 as of 1914—indeed, even more relevant). Secondly, as between a country that is pushing out for power and wealth, and a country that is determined to retain the power and wealth she has got by past exploitation, there is not, *in that regard*, a ha'porth of moral difference. There may of course be a great deal of moral difference *in other regards* as between regimes that find themselves in such a clash ; to use symbolic terms, "Neville Chamberlain" (whom heaven forbid that I should praise) was an angel of light in comparison with "Adolf Hitler."

This, then, is the first element in the special German problem. It is clear that a solution can be found only in the *general* solution already suggested : German energy, power of organisation, and resources must be at the service, not of exploitation, but of inter-

* See page 20.

national socialist planning. A socialist Germany must operate in a socialist world. If anything special is indicated over and above this general solution, it can only be the even greater necessity, if greater necessity be possible, for utterly destroying German capitalism—German capitalism, not Germany—than for destroying other capitalisms.

CHAPTER V—THE GERMAN PROBLEM—II.

But there is a second element in the special German problem which enriches the analysis and, while reinforcing our conclusion, makes it necessary to emphasise still more strongly one aspect of it.

The history of Germany, and in particular of Prussia-in-Germany, from the days of Frederick William, "The Great Elector," to the present moment, has been one of the progressive coalescence, into a single instrument of absolutist State power, of the militarists, the junkers (the big landowners) and, finally, the industrialists. The penultimate phase of this alliance was signalled by Bismarck's tariff laws: the ultimate phase, by the combination of Ludendorffs, Thyssens, Hindenburgs, etc., etc., that brought Hitler to power. It is characteristic that it was Ludendorff, ex-military dictator of Germany, who already in 1923 introduced Thyssen, chief of German heavy industry, to Hitler.

The absolutism, it is true, apparently disappeared from 1918 to 1932; but the power of all its constituent parts was, as we shall see, unbroken, so that it was only waiting to reappear.

The coalescence of the industrialists with the governmental power was not confined to Germany alone: it was a feature of all highly developed industrial States in the near-imperialist and imperialist eras. Nor was it peculiar to Germany that behind this alliance there loomed the military resources of the State. But what was, in Europe, peculiar to Germany, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, was the progressive identification of junkerdom and industrialism with the *militarist absolutism* of the State.

Or, put in another way: *It was under the auspices of militarist absolutism* that Germany was finally unified: it was this unification which gave her capitalists their chance, both at home and abroad: and this chance occurred at the moment (1871) of a grand expansion of capitalism, and as free capitalism was developing into monopoly capitalism. So the middle class, which, when liberal, had been too weak to overthrow the autocracy, became strong just as it was ceasing to be liberal: it was as a "big

business " class that it at last got power,* and it got it by coalescing with the autocracy which in its liberal phase it had always opposed. Liberals became National Liberals.

Two results followed :

(1) Since Germany was unified at such a moment, under such auspices, and in such a way, a particularly *deliberate* form of reaction, very strong by reason of the " triple alliance " behind it, was to be in control of all the springs of State action. The process was beginning which was to end in the totalitarian inculcation by the State of the lethal Nazi ideology. The State was assisted in its task by the absence, not of a democratic or revolutionary tradition, but of an *effective* one: for Germany had " missed " her democratic revolution, owing to the failure of the middle class to achieve her unification by its own power. If the middle class had really succeeded in 1848, it would have won liberty for Germany as well as unity: for in the liberal movement the two ideas had been inseparable. After 1871 it was only from the working class that any fundamental challenge to the State power could come: but though the Social Democrats, in spite of persecution, grew very strong on paper, at the two great crises of 1914 and 1918 they were beaten by the earlier failure of their own middle class and by their inexperience of power—in a word, once again, by the previous absence of any effective democratic or revolutionary tradition.

(2) As monopoly capitalism developed, its itch for markets (specially aggressive in Germany, because of the " unequal development " explained in the last chapter) gradually became identified, far more *consistently and closely* in Germany than anywhere else in the West, with the conscious idea of military glory: until under Hitler it completely coalesced with a deliberate plan to conquer and dominate the whole world. In the East, Japan is an almost exact parallel.

History had previously been full of exploitation primarily for exploitation's sake, as with us in India. It had also been full of conquest primarily for conquest's sake, as with Napoleon (who, whatever the initial impulse behind his campaigns, and however beneficial many of the results, was one of the wickedest of all aggressors): but never in modern times has there been this terrible identification of deliberate world exploitation and deliberate world conquest. That could only happen in the era of twentieth century Imperialism; and, happening then, its results are horrible beyond the power of imagination, for the

* But in the *formal political* sense its power was very limited under Bismarck's constitution, and until October, 1918

threat comes just at the time when man's control over the resources of nature, to say nothing of his growing knowledge of the human mind, give it the power to wreak havoc impossible in any other period of the world's history. If Hitler's threat were allowed to succeed, it might be literally impossible to recreate civilisation.

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Why had there been no democratic revolution in Germany? Why had there been, instead, this coalescence into a unitary State absolutism of militarists, industrialists and junkers? You can look at it both negatively and positively. Negatively, the break up of the Holy Roman Empire had, as we have seen, made Germany a chaos of innumerable territories: towns had been subjugated by princes and junkers: she had been the battleground of domestic and foreign armies: the Thirty Years' War had produced the devastation already described: trade had been retarded. All this played into the hands of those above—the junkers and militarists: the bourgeoisie, the trading class, which could alone have been an effective revolutionary force, did not exist in a form capable of making a successful challenge until its interests had become identical with those of the dominant power. Positively, demands for reform, sometimes even of a revolutionary nature, were constantly arising from below; but the dominant power was always able either to defeat them, or, more characteristically, to grant them in such a way as not merely to preserve but to increase the strength of the absolutist complex. *At no point has there been a fight of those below culminating in the overthrow of those above*, as in Britain or France: even 1918 is an exception in appearance only. In this italicised sentence is expressed the inner tragedy of the modern German *Reich*: and by that tragedy is to be explained the strength of the reaction which culminates in Hitler.

I am stating facts, not according blame. It is vulgar to blame the German people—the toy-maker of Nürnberg or the steel-worker of the Ruhr—for something the roots of which lie deep in history. It is doubly vulgar, when the blame comes from those whose national history has been far more fortunate; and trebly so, when it comes from people who would sell their souls to the devil precisely to prevent a revolution of any kind whatsoever.

* * * * *

What conclusions must we draw from our consideration of this second element in the special German problem? They are two:

First, the power of the German militarists, industrialists and

junkers—all three—and the alliance between the three, must be utterly broken.

Secondly—and this is the very heart and centre of what I wish to say : it is, indeed, the main purpose of this book—while the necessary condition for accomplishing this end is the total defeat of Hitlerite Germany from without, *the end itself must be accomplished from within. This time there must be a fight of those below culminating in the overthrow of those above. Unless the German people themselves overthrow their militarists, junkers and industrialists by means of a democratic (which in the twentieth century must be a socialist) revolution, the terrible lessons of the past will be repeated. The whole of modern German history proves that the German people will win freedom only if they win it FOR THEMSELVES by the conquest of power. It cannot be won for them or "granted" to them. And their winning of it is the condition for a genuine, solidly based, liberalising of Germany.*

Consider what happened in 1918. (I do not blame the Social Democrats for what they did, though I wholly deplore it : is it certain that in that terrible moment of defeat, with chaos threatening and the fear of Bolshevism, our own Labour Party would have acted very, or at all, differently?)

General Groener, who had succeeded Ludendorff, entered into an "alliance" with Ebert, Chairman of the Social Democratic Party, to whom the last Imperial Chancellor, Prince Max von Baden, had handed over the reins of government. "We formed an alliance for the fight against Bolshevism," said Groener in 1925. "There was no possibility of a restoration of the monarchy. . . . Our goal on November 10th was the establishment of a proper Government, the support of its rule by troops and by the National Assembly as soon as possible. I advised the Field-Marshal at the outset not to fight against the revolution with arms, as it was to be feared that, with the temper of the troops as it was, such resistance would break down. I proposed to him that the Supreme Army Council should ally itself with the Majority Socialists . . ."

Thus the military power was unbroken. So was that of the industrialists : no attempt was made to expropriate them. So was that of the junkers : the land was not nationalised. So was that of the bureaucracy. Under the façade of the Republic, *the real sources of power remained where they had been* : the State was not destroyed and replaced by another. Hitler was the result.

That Versailles facilitated this development there can be no manner of doubt : for instance, by imposing on conquered Germany a small and heavily equipped professional army, which inevitably played into the hands of the old officer elements and

deprived the Republic of the only weapon democracy can use against reaction—a people's militia. Stresemann, not, within his limitations, the least good of Europeans, "had always held" says D'Abernon* "that the clause of the Treaty . . . stipulating that recruits should be engaged for twelve years was a fatal error. It made the Army a caste, a kind of Praetorian Guard divorced from and in opposition to the mass of the people. It would have been much better if the Army had been recruited on the old short-service basis." There is also evidence to show that, in spite of the disarmament clauses of the Treaty, we were already encouraging the counter-revolutionary bands which were to develop into Hitler's S.A. and S.S. Under date November 23rd 1920 D'Abernon, after emphasising the necessity for proceeding vigorously with the destruction of the larger war material, adds: "I should advise a somewhat less energetic and categorical attitude [about small arms and rifles] . . . I should fear to disarm the orderly sections of the people, leaving arms in the hands of the extreme socialists and Spartacists. . . . Regarding the Einwohnerwehr and Orgesch organisations, it is difficult to decide whether these make for order or for future trouble. . . . I consider the danger from the left far exceeds the danger from the right, and in the event of a new outbreak of communism in Germany . . . these organisations would powerfully serve the cause of order." That D'Abernon's "advice" was in line with consistent Allied sabotage of a genuine German revolution must be clear to all who have read the record of the times. On November 13th 1918 Lansing, the U.S.A. Foreign Secretary, had replied to a cable from Ebert about the threatening famine in Germany as follows: "The President has advised me to say that he is willing to consider favourably the delivery of food to Germany and to submit this matter immediately to the Allied Governments on condition that Germany will prove that she will uphold law and order [i.e., suppress the revolutionary socialists] . . ."† and Stampfer states that immediately after the breakdown of the Kapp *putsch* on March 17th 1920 "the representatives of the Allies called on the Vice-Chancellor to convey their congratulations. The British representative, Lord Kilmarnock, added that in his opinion the delivery of raw materials and food and the grant of loans would be possible only if constitutional conditions reigned. He presented a note stating that the Supreme Council was resolved to stop all deliveries [of raw materials and food] if a Soviet or monarchist

* *Op. cit.* III, p. 56.

† Müller-Franken, *Die November-Revolution*, p. 162.

Government should seize power.”* We shall see in Chapter VI that Vansittart gives an almost identical warning about the coming armistice and peace: he tells us that we want neither a communist nor a monarchist revolution in Germany.† The words “Soviet” (used by Kilmarnock) and “communist” (used by Vansittart) are both, of course, intended to mean “genuinely socialist.”

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Look at the matter from a different angle. If the German people does not itself destroy the power of its industrialists, junkers, and militarists, then that power will certainly not be destroyed at all. For what are the alternatives to a revolutionary socialist government of the German people? There are only two: we can give support from outside (for instance, by our method of food distribution) to one or other, or all three, of the elements in the old absolutist complex, in the interests of “law and order”: or we can hold Germany down by an army of occupation, which will inevitably have to rely, in the interests of this same law and order, on these identical elements. An army of occupation to hold Germany down, but co-operating with a revolutionary people's government, is a contradiction in terms: though an army helping the German people to overthrow their own reactionaries is quite a different matter. Whether it were an army of occupation or support of the reactionary elements from without, the result would be the same: the tragedy of 1918 to 1939 would inevitably be repeated.

And isn't it clear that a Government which did not wish to encourage a genuine revolution in Germany would also be a Government which wished to co-operate with the counter-revolutionary elements?

Except in the unlikely event of its conquest by the Soviet Union, there are, indeed, only two solutions for Europe in this twentieth century. Either it must be a self-governing socialist Europe, or it must be a patchwork of capitalist or fascist States, dominated at first by Anglo-American monopoly capitalism, and then, perhaps, competing with it. The latter alternative, though it might mean a “solution” for a decade or even conceivably for a generation, and though of course incomparably preferable to a Nazi Europe, could hardly fail to reproduce the situation out of which came 1914 and 1939. That would mean to doom our children or our children's children to a fate even worse—such

* Friedrich Stampfer, *Die 14 Jahre der ersten deutschen Revolution*, p. 161.

† See page 47.

is the progress of science—than that which has already twice befallen our own generation.

When we talk of “ a self-governing socialist Europe ” we are of course over-simplifying : things are not as clear-cut as that. Neither Germany nor Europe will become socialist in a single day : the process will be a confused one, perhaps extending over many years. But everything will depend on the initial impulse which is given as the war draws to its close ; everything will depend on whether the sources of reactionary power are boldly attacked, or whether rather they are left undisturbed or even strengthened. This topic will be dealt with more fully in Chapter X.

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Nobody pretends that the fostering of a German revolution is going to be easy : but neither will the military victory over Hitler be easy. It was not the prospect of an easy triumph that called out the finest spirit of the nation : it was Mr. Churchill's promise to us of blood and tears and toil and sweat. It is with toil and sweat that we should be helping the German people to accomplish their revolution, now, and progressively as the war gets nearer to its end : now, mainly by insisting on propaganda which makes the German people understand that they have everything to gain, and nothing to fear, from the overthrow of Hitler's tyranny, and that it is only by their own act that they can win freedom for themselves and the world.

Into this task men and women of progressive temper should put the same energy, the same sense that this is our last chance, which they are now putting, or should be putting, into the war effort itself. For to get behind the revolution of the German people against their militarists, industrialists and junkers is as important as to defeat Hitler by force of arms : indeed, the two tasks are one. There is much that we can be doing already, by way both of influencing our Government and of building up a body of public opinion in opposition to those who would lead us towards a repetition of the old disaster. And there will be far more to do when, as the Hitler machine begins to crack, what is at present scattered, unco-ordinated, and comparatively ineffective opposition within Germany begins to develop—if it gets the right support—into an open revolutionary movement.

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But if we are not to lose our opportunity, there must be a shift to the left, as rapid as possible, on our own British front : and to this also, in spite of all difficulties, we should now be bending our efforts. The breakdown of the Hitler machine will mean an upsurge on the continent of Europe of every sort of revolutionary,

quasi-revolutionary and counter-revolutionary movement. There will be irredentist, nationalist, militarist, monarchist, gentlemanly Right Wing, Big Business, democratic and socialist movements. Which groups will this country support? On that the future of the world will depend: and that itself will depend a great deal on the balance of forces in this country. To this topic also we shall return in Chapter X.

CHAPTER VI.—THE POSSIBILITY OF A GERMAN REVOLUTION: AND THE GERMAN CHARACTER.

Two replies are commonly made to the foregoing argument. First, a German revolution is an impossibility: secondly, "the German character" is such that "the Germans" will always be aggressors, and a German revolution, therefore, would solve nothing. Let us consider these two points in turn.

I

Is A German Revolution Possible?

Even the bare possibility of a revolution of the German people is being increasingly denied. If there were such a possibility, we are asked, why haven't they revolted already? Or why, at least, have they shown no signs of revolt? On the contrary, it is said, they are solidly behind Hitler in his bloodiest outrages. Alternatively, in so far as they do *not* appear to be solidly behind Hitler, or in so far as there appears to be a hope—or a danger?—of a German revolution, then that simply means that they are preparing, or will prepare, to "whine for mercy."

The Soviet authorities have at no time made any such mistake. At a Press conference at Kuibyshev on or about January 14th 1942,* M. Lozovsky said that "*in addition to the vertical split in the German nation* [the context shows that he meant the normal and well-understood split between the people and the Government apparatus] there was now an increasingly wide horizontal split between certain generals": on the 24th anniversary of the Revolution a message was sent of "Greetings to the German people groaning under the yoke of Hitler's blackguard bands. We wish them victory over bloodthirsty Hitler!": on December 10th 1941 *Pravda* wrote "Hitler's gang is afraid of the German people. . . Peace with Germany can be concluded and

* *Times*, January 15th 1942.

will be concluded only when the German people have driven Hitler and his clique out of Germany": and the *Soviet War News* of December 17th 1941 reproduces a Moscow broadcast which stated that "It is no accident that the overwhelming majority of German prisoners taken during the last few days on the Moscow front are extremely anti-Hitler. The hour is not so far distant when in the rear the ground will burst into flames, under the very feet of the Nazis."* The revolutionary beginning is being fostered in a number of ways. There has been, for instance, a conference at Kuibyshev with German prisoners of war, to consider how best Hitler may be overthrown†; and while it appears that S.S. regiments on Soviet soil are not being spared, among other prisoners a socialist propaganda sheet in German, *Das Freie Wort*, is being distributed.‡ All this receives little attention in the big-circulation British Press.

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It is for two reasons that the popularity of this argument—"revolution impossible"—is increasing. The heat with which the possibility of a German revolution is denied shows the dawn of an understanding that the German revolution is indeed the rival claimant to that other "solution" of holding down the German people by force of arms: and it shows, also, to anyone with the smallest psychological insight, *fear* of a German revolution, and a determination to do everything possible to prevent it. If a man goes about telling the people of this country that it is impossible to beat Hitler, we rightly put him in jail: for we know that he is saying this because he doesn't *want* us to beat Hitler. That Vansittartism is as often as not simply a form of counter-revolution is illustrated by a letter contributed to *The Sunday Times* of November 30th 1941 by a Conservative M.P. After the "common form" material about "the innate characteristics of the German nation" we come upon this revealing sentence:

"Britain must maintain a strong Army, a strong Navy and a strong Air Force. Only a strong Britain and a strong America can maintain the peace of the world and keep down not only the danger of aggression but the smouldering fires of revolution which may yet set Europe aflame, and from which perhaps even our own country may not remain immune."

This is, so far as I am aware, the first occasion on which we

* Quoted in a letter by Andrew Rothstein to *The New Statesman*, January 3rd 1942.

† *World News and Views*, November 29th 1941.

‡ *Time and Tide*, January 17th 1942.

have been openly told that one of the functions of Anglo-American military power will be to hold down not merely the German but also the British people.

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It is impossible to give more than a small fraction of the evidence which shows that even the apparent solidarity of the German people behind Hitler is grossly exaggerated, and that any real solidarity is a myth. The whole of it would fill a volume : and much cannot be published, for reasons that are obvious. But the following indications may be given.

1. This is what Himmler said shortly before the war :

" . . . We must have more concentration camps. The Fuehrer has given me unrestricted powers to arrest anyone I consider suspect . . .

" . . . We will have to deal not merely with the Army on land, the Navy at sea, and the *Luftwaffe* in the air ; *we shall have a fourth battlefield to look after : Inner Germany !*

" At the beginning of the war, mass arrests on an unprecedented scale will be necessary . . . many political prisoners will have to be shot out of hand . . . the entire country must be occupied by a minimum of thirty Death's Head divisions.

" No unit ever to be used in its home-district ; every unit to be moved to another district every third week . . .

" None of these units to be wasted on ordinary police duties, nor must any man with the skull-and-cross-bones badge ever patrol a street alone. They must appear in units only . . . Once the emergency arises, utter ruthlessness is essential . . .

" We must consider every aspect of this problem, and we must have no illusions about the fact that any war in which we neglected the internal battle-ground would lead to catastrophe."

Would Himmler have said that, and have acted accordingly, if *he*, who was in the best position of anyone in the world to know, had thought that the German people would be solidly behind Hitler in the event of war ?

2. But Himmler was perhaps mistaken ? No. The German Press, metropolitan and provincial, is constantly publishing the names of those beheaded or sentenced to long terms of imprisonment for political offences. The list is a formidable one ; and one may draw several deductions from it. First, that the number of people executed or imprisoned is far greater than the number published : the German Government publishes specimens to intimidate. Secondly, the very fact that the Government publishes these names shows the *necessity* they feel for intimidating the population. Thirdly, for every man or woman who

deliberately runs the risk of being beheaded, there must be very many who would revolt if they dared, but whose courage stops just short of this. Think for a moment, critic, what it means for a man to put his head, eyes upwards, on the block and watch the axe descend.

3. The penalty for listening to a foreign broadcast is, for a German, a term, and often a very long term, of imprisonment : the penalty for spreading what you have heard is death. What conclusions should we draw if Mr. Churchill enacted such a decree? A most elaborate system of espionage is in force to detect any breach of the decree ; yet our Government, not to mention the Russians, thinks it worth while to undertake an elaborate round-the-clock programme. They, at least, apparently think that a sufficient number of Germans is prepared, in spite of the Gestapo, to run the risk of listening to " the enemy." And I am told by someone in London who is watching German developments closely—a man of the most scrupulous integrity—that the Germans who listen to foreign broadcasts can be numbered by the million. Already in December 1939 William Shirer was testifying in his *Berlin Diary*, which I shall quote later, to the prevalence of this practice, in spite of an official warning which concluded " No mercy will be shown the idiotic criminals who listen to the lies of the enemy."*

4. The *Times* newspaper wrote as follows on December 17th 1941 :

" For months the German newspapers have upbraided groups of the people who have remained apathetic in spite of all the great German victories. ' We are conquering ourselves to death ' —that is a foolish and un-German saying, the newspapers have declared. But now something very like it has appeared in print : in the important *Westdeutscher Beobachter*. A leading article the other day was headed, ' The complete change in the world picture,' and declared :

' The longer the war lasts the more we shall realise its intrinsic laws. When the Polish war ended we thought that a final decision would come soon. After France had been conquered we wondered when the jump across the Channel would be launched. England's share in the world developed to a super-dimensional size and behind her appeared the United States. After June 22nd we turned again towards the East. Today, six months afterwards, we know that nothing was as we had expected it to be. The only thing we know for certain today is : at the end of this war the greatest revolu-

* William Shirer : *Berlin Diary* (London, 1941), p. 209.

tion of all times will take place and a completely new age will begin.'

"That paragraph might almost have been written in Great Britain for broadcasting to Germany."

5. In his speech on December 11th 1941 Hitler thought it necessary to attack saboteurs on the home front with open savagery. He said :

"In September 1939 I assured you that neither force of arms nor time would overcome Germany. I will now assure my enemies that neither force of arms nor time nor any internal doubts can make us waver in the performance of our duty. When we think of the sacrifices of our soldiers, any sacrifice made on the home front is completely unimportant. . . . Anyone who tries to evade this duty has no claim to be regarded as a fellow-German.

"Just as we were unmercifully hard in our struggle for power we shall be unmercifully hard in the struggle to maintain our nation. At a time when thousands of our best men are dying nobody must expect to live who tries to depreciate the sacrifices made at the front. No matter under what camouflage he tries to disturb this German front, or to undermine the resistance of our people, or to weaken the authority of the regime, or to sabotage the achievements on the home front, he shall die for it."

The following day Goebbels wrote in *Das Reich* :

"Our German unity is only of recent date. We are still bearing the scars from the divisions of the old party politics. Carefully and jealously we have to watch that they do not reopen even in a single place."

Late in December he wrote in the same paper :

"Certain people . . . have grown accustomed to take their small, often negligible daily troubles much too seriously . . . the grievance becomes the subject of *hours of excited discussion*."

6. The *Times* newspaper wrote on December 17th 1941 as follows :

"Once again the danger of expecting too much from any potential divisions has to be emphasised. Divisions will appear only after hard military knocks on all fronts. But the German authorities are already taking the possibilities seriously. Executive police power, in the event of any emergency or serious military disorder, is vested in men like sanitary inspectors, veterinary officials as well as in the A.R.P. and the Workers' Guards formed in most German factories. If a policeman is not near, any of these men have the power to arrest and even to shoot. Similar

powers are given to quisling organisations in the enslaved countries. In addition to such documentary evidence come reports that the German secret police are taking over more apartments in many working class districts in Berlin and elsewhere."

7. A group of German socialists, called *Neubeginnen*, has for several years published "Reports from Inside Germany." Everyone interested can testify that these reports have always been models of objectivity: they have erred, if anything, on the side of pessimism, and have not hesitated to paint a very black picture at times when the Gestapo was successfully stamping out any open signs of revolt. All the more impressive is the issue of December 14th 1941, which deals with the situation of about three months previously. I want to quote, first a short and then a long passage:

"It is this general background which gives special importance to the fact that during the last few months a significant change occurred in the German factories.

"Hitherto the campaigns of this war at no time involved the full military strength of Germany. After the conclusion of operations in one theatre of war the more important classes of workers were released for work in the war industries. Now, however, the mobilisation of the army has become complete. And the problem of man-power, one of the most dangerous bottlenecks in the German war economy, has become evident.

"Roughly: every seventh worker in a German factory is a foreigner. On the other hand, owing to the mobilisation, the younger workers have practically disappeared from the factories and with them most of those who—without any other political experience—have been subjected to Nazi education.

"Thus, once again, the older classes of the German workers are predominant in the German factories. They still remember very well the time before Hitler came to power. Most of them have grown up in the tradition of the former labour movement and are experienced trade unionists. Once again these workers are feeling themselves more secure. There seems to be no longer reason to be afraid of one's neighbour in the workshop. The foreign workers are regarded not as a danger but as comrades. Quite a number of reports from other sources, especially reports from foreign workers, confirm what is said in our latest report from Hamburg of the factory of Mr. X. The German workers whose attitude in 1935 compelled the Nazi regime to abolish for ever the election of shop stewards (*Vertrauensraete*), are in no way more friendly towards the regime to-day—in the third year of Hitler's war.

"What conclusions can be drawn from these reports? It would be irresponsible to nourish the illusion that the development of German conditions has already reached the point of imminent danger to the regime. The powerful Nazi machine with all its branches is still intact. The terror is still effective. And up to now there are no setbacks such as could shake Hitler's dictatorship.

"Remember, however, Hitler's Reichstag speech of December 11th. Why did he utter those furious threats against people if there is really that iron unity of all Germans of which he talked so often? Anyone who listened to this speech of Hitler's could have no doubt that the Nazi regime must be seriously worried by the attitude of a great many Germans at this crucial point of the war. We feel sure that we do not exaggerate if we say that *the German factories* are one of the reasons for Hitler's otherwise inexplicable attacks on internal saboteurs. Here are the weak points in Germany's armour—and the points on which the attacks of foreign propaganda should mainly be directed. All reports tell us that listening in to foreign broadcasts has spread all over Germany. Even the hardest punishment does not prevent people from listening. But even with the most convinced opponents of the Nazis fear of the future is great. They don't like Hitler to be victorious. On the other hand they are completely in the dark about what will come after Hitler's downfall.

"Here are the chances for a serious and honest propaganda. There can be no doubt about the fact that countless people in Germany itself will be ready to listen no less earnestly. The war itself ought to do the rest."

Here is the longer passage :

"The informant is a middle-aged Jewish mechanic who left Hamburg in the first days of September 1941. There he worked in a factory until he left.

"In his firm about a hundred workmen worked continually with him on the same shift. The firm very often had orders from the Army which had to be executed on Army grounds where the workers had frequent contact with soldiers and guardsmen. When there was overtime or nightwork the workmen had their meals in the guardhouse and, during bad weather or air raids, they found shelter in the barracks. This led to conversations with the soldiers.

"Mr. X. was known to his colleagues and to the soldiers as a Non-Aryan. He never met any difficulties nor disrespect—on the contrary!! Known as a Jew, he was considered from the

beginning to be a natural opponent to the Nazi regime and he found that he had the confidence of all the workers.

"According to the experiences of Mr. X. there was not a single worker in the whole factory who was not an opponent of the Nazi system. Many of the workers expressed their hostility towards the Nazis quite frankly during conversations. The group of workmen with whom Mr. X. worked consisted mainly of middle-aged men—only a few were younger than 30 years. Most of them were fathers of families. This group usually worked outside the town. Every morning they were brought by trucks to their place of work. During the drive to their working place, political questions, events of the war, and the causes of the war were discussed freely. All the discussions showed a pointed hostility towards the regime. All spoke with contempt of the corruption amongst the Nazis, of the cases of suppression and persecution of which they had personal knowledge.

"The attitude towards the war was generally negative. All the military successes could not shake the conviction that 'there will be nothing but victories until they have lost the war' and 'we will have to pay for it.' Even before the war in Russia started, there was no tension between the former social-democrats and the former communists. Since Russia has become a partner in the war, the unity has been strengthened. Everybody is convinced that this system will go down soon as neither the world nor the German people will stand to be subjugated for ever.

" 'First they forced us to slave for them, then to starve for them, and now to be shot for them.' This was a very frequent comment. Everybody said 'The Nazis' and never 'The Germans' or 'We.'

"At work when they met with strangers, the conversation was much more cautious. Sometimes, however, conversations with guards and soldiers occurred which were more or less along the same line. As soon as there was a contact and the necessary confidence established, the men in uniform and men in working clothes showed that there was no difference in their attitude to the war or the problems of the day. Sometimes the soldiers were more hostile in their attitude towards the war than the workmen. All conversations were centred around 'the unavoidable defeat' as the result of all their victories. 'They go on conquering until they are defeated' and 'those blackguards will run away in time.' These phrases were commonly used by soldiers.

"Besides the conversation about the war and Nazi system, food was the main subject. The supplies for the soldiers and for the workmen as well, which they got in their canteen, were relatively good. All the same there was a lot of grumbling about

the general scarcity of food. There was always a hint that those at the top could sit back comfortably. 'Those brown scoundrels'—that was the name common to everyone connected with the Nazis. No exception was made for Hitler.

"One conviction was prevalent. 'The Third Reich will break down—it is all dirt—a great fraud which can only be kept up by force'; but what will happen after the defeat of the Nazis, no one knows but it is hoped that there will be no dictatorship. The word 'Freedom' is used very often as an expression of longing. 'Freedom' means to them the right to say, to work and to do what they like in private life as well as in political organisations. However, people are very pessimistic about what the victors will do to Germany. The word 'Versailles' is mentioned in every conversation about the future and people are afraid of the new 'peace of the victors' (Siegerfrieden).

"The start of the war in Russia has strengthened the hopes for a better future because everyone expects that Russia will not make a 'peace of the victors' and a new Versailles.

"Occasionally people in their conversation with Mr. X. touched upon the Jewish problem. Usually there was a remark that the special laws against the Jews were despicable. The workmen as well as the soldiers were very often philo-semitic. For instance, when in August the Yellow Star was introduced as a distinguishing sign of the Jews, some of the workmen said, 'we, too, will put on this thing so that we might be taken for decent fellows.' There was no real hatred against the Jews. Mr. X. experienced nothing but friendliness and confidence.

"In the house in which Mr. X. lived, most of the tenants were officials and business men. They were much more reserved than the people with whom he worked, but the attitude of the families against the Jewish Mr. X. has always been decidedly friendly. There was a time when he had no social relations with his neighbours at all, but now he and his wife were greeted friendly by their neighbours and the neighbours started conversations with them. Such conversations condemned the actions of the Nazis against the Jews and complained about the 'swinish situation' (Schweinerei) in which everybody was forced to live. According to regulations, a pail of water and a pail of sand had to be placed before the entrance door of every apartment, as a first-aid in bombing attacks. Rarely a night passed without Mr. X. finding some food on the top of his sand pail—fruit, fats and other goods that the Jews were not allowed to buy. One neighbour had an orchard and during the harvest time, Mr. X.'s sand pail was usually filled with fruit. Sometimes he found a note on the top of it 'this is windfall without value,' but it was always really first-class

fruit. Shortly before Mr. X. left Germany, the friendliness of his neighbours became more pronounced. He was envied for being able to leave Germany. When Mr. X. said farewell to an official in his house and thanked him for his kindness, he got this for an answer : ' You do not need to thank me—I have done nothing. I am an official and a member of the N.S.D.A.P. but I wish you all happiness—you are very lucky. You will again be among human beings whereas we here shall die in dirt, physically and morally.'

"An important theme for conversation on the ride to work among the workmen was the report on the London radio programme of the evening before. These tales showed that every second or third man listened in regularly to the London sender. To supplement the information there were reports on the news from the Moscow sender. The reports of the German High Command usually were compared with the news from abroad. There was a lot of criticism of the foreign news services; people particularly complained that there was not sufficient information and not sufficient counter propaganda against the Third Reich. There is a real hunger for reliable news and political anti-Nazi radio items. There were always discussions as to why the slavery of the German people sentenced to forced labour, to starvation and to 'death for the fatherland' has not been brought out in the English broadcasts. These conversations about the English radio were often very wild and loud and Mr. X. sometimes felt compelled to warn them and remind them that heavy punishment and even a death penalty threatened. The answer to such warnings was a shrug of the shoulders and a remark like 'we all know so much about one another that nobody can become a traitor.' Once a comment was heard to this effect : 'To die from hunger, or by the hangman or as a hero, is all the same to us. We shall be ruined in any case by those "dogs".' The feeling that every one was more than fed up with the war and desired it to end now was so strong that it overcame all thought of caution, particularly in this circle where all persons were well-known to each other.

"The people in the house of Mr. X. also had radio sets and listened to foreign transmissions but they had not spoken very much about it. Sometimes the women talked to each other in the following way, 'Can you imagine how the foreigners lie. Yesterday somebody said on the radio . . .' and then followed a report about the English information. Sometimes a woman would interrupt and correct these statements."

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I have no doubt that Lord Vansittart will stigmatise this as the lying propaganda of a group of German socialists who want

to be "let off lightly." Why should he be so anxious to do so? Is it because, like the Conservative M.P. already quoted, he doesn't *want* a German revolution? Probably; for in his second pamphlet, *Roots of the Trouble*, he writes; "Besides, what sort of a revolution do you want? Communist? Militarist? A combination of the two, which is also possible [sic]? None of these? So what? . . . 'Revolution' may not be the happiest beginning, anyhow without definition . . ."

Some at least of those responsible for our propaganda to Germany, however, do not share Lord Vansittart's scepticism. Mr. R. H. S. Crossman broadcast a talk to the Hamburg workers on the 2nd of December 1941 at 7 p.m., in the course of which he said:

"Today I am talking specially to the building workers and workers in the shipyards of Hamburg. In the reports which we receive about conditions in Hamburg there are constant references to your sturdy resistance. Though your unions have been disbanded, you have preserved their fighting spirit: and now that so many of the younger men who have been through the H.J. have been called up, your anti-fascist solidarity is stronger than ever. One thing which pleases us—though it does not surprise us—in several recent reports is your attitude to the foreign workers. We in the British Labour Movement welcome the news that you have received these Belgians and Danes and Frenchmen and Dutchmen with such comradeship and treated them not as enemies but as allies in a common struggle. When the day of liberation comes we and our allies shall not forget your courage and comradeship now.

"Naturally many of these foreign workers have not the political education of the German worker, nor have they learned, like you, by eight years of bitter experience the stratagems which the workers must employ under fascism. To this lack of political education and of experience comes also the language difficulty, creating natural barriers between you and the foreign workers. But these barriers can be overcome—and we know they are being overcome in Hamburg. . . . We know that you are our allies, awaiting the day for action."

* * * * *

The past is often cited as an argument for the impossibility of a German revolution. By precisely the same argument it might have been "proved" that the Russian Revolution was "impossible." The final horror of 1917 gave the Russian revolutionaries their opportunity: the final horror of Hitlerism, different altogether from anything the German people has ever endured, will give the German revolutionaries theirs, once the

stranglehold of the regime has, by defeat, been removed. Nor is it true that Germany is without a history of political struggle. The struggle has not succeeded, for the reasons already explained ; but it has been there. One could point to the situation which led to the Prussian reform : to the minor upsurge of 1830 : and to the major upsurge of 1848. One could mention the fact that, in spite of Bismarck's anti-socialist laws and his persecution of socialists, nevertheless the Social Democratic Party advanced so steadily in the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first of the twentieth that at the outbreak of the war it was the largest single party in the Reichstag. Finally, in March 1933, when Hitler was already Chancellor, when the terror was in full swing, and when the whole propaganda machine was in the Fuehrer's hands, nevertheless he failed to secure a majority of votes, and only just secured a majority in combination with Hugenberg's nationalists.

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I should like to ask these heroic ladies and gentlemen, these people who are so shocked because Hitler has not *already* been overthrown—just *how* could the German people have done it ? Did Captain Harold Balfour, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Air, put this question to himself before he said " Some leaders of ecclesiastical and political thought told us that we must not hate Germany and the Germans. He believed that every German, active or *passive*, who had *lent himself* to Nazi rule must bear after the war his share of guilt." ?* [My italics]. Is Captain Balfour unaware that the Gestapo is the most awful weapon of espionage, delation, and terror that has ever been forged : that there is a spy in every street, in every block, sometimes in your very room ? Even in the occupied territories there has as yet been no decisive revolt : but there patriotism works against Hitler, whereas in Germany it works for him. Some of these critics should be the last to underestimate the influence of patriotism. They think of this as a fight between two " countries " and not as, what it is or should be, an international civil war. Would they not, then, in their hearts despise a German who sabotaged the war effort of his own country ? I have heard a prominent Vansittartite say as much. Once war has broken out, even potential revolutionaries become divided in mind, hesitant, unwilling to precipitate defeat—especially if they are led to believe that defeat will mean not freedom but annihilation. Again, the influence of the propaganda machine in Germany cannot be overestimated. Press, radio, pamphlets, books, speeches—all suppress the truth and spread lies.

Is it anything very wonderful that many believe what they are told, and do not believe what they never have a chance of hearing? Before and after the outbreak of the war, the German people was told, hour by hour and with circumstantial detail, that the Poles had inflicted unnameable atrocities on their "blood brethren"—atrocities of a sort identical with those now really being perpetrated by the Nazis in Russia. Masses of them, of course, believed it: in a similar situation, and with a similar control of the Press, masses of Englishmen would have believed the same.

I confess that self-righteous indignation about the cowardice of the German people, in the situation in which they find themselves, makes me feel a little sick. It comes particularly ill from those who hobnobbed with Hitler while in the next street Germans were being tortured for their bravery and independence by Hitler's Gestapo.

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Of course, there is not yet an *organised* opposition to Hitler: if there were, we should already be in the presence of the revolution, because it is precisely such organised opposition that the machinery of the totalitarian State was created to prevent. That organised opposition will develop when Hitler's apparatus of oppression has been shaken to its foundations by military defeats of which his Russian setback is a presage, and when his victory has become plainly impossible: and we must be ready then to give every possible assistance to the German people—and not to the German junkers, industrialists and militarists, their enemies.

II.

- *The German Character*

It is argued that, as "the Germans" are essentially and in a special sense aggressive, over and above normal human aggressiveness, a revolution would make no difference: they would still have to be "held down."

The argument is not stated with conspicuous clarity, either in *Black Record* or elsewhere. According to *Black Record* the Germans are and have always been—with the exception of a hopelessly small and ineffective minority—either "butcher-birds," or so docile and obedient as readily to acquiesce in butchery and sadism (as presumably they would have readily acquiesced in anything else offered to them): and this apparently not merely environmentally but even genetically, which is a bad lookout for such Englishmen as spring from a common stock. We

are not, however, told the proportion between the two types, which is highly relevant. If ninety-nine per cent. were genetically sadists and one per cent. obedient, then that would be one thing : if, on the other hand, ninety-nine per cent. were obedient (even genetically, to talk meaningless rubbish) that of course would be something else again. For if specially obedient people will follow men who lead them to war they will also follow men who lead them to peace.

Intelligence apart (which one feels more strongly every day, must surely be inherited) and to ignore those mysterious first five years (for to discuss them would take us too far afield) the fact no doubt is that, by and large and in a rough and ready sort of way, we are made what we are by environment and circumstances. There are sadism and masochism in all of us : a little more of one or both in some, a little less of one or both in another. How they are to come out depends on the environment.

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Before considering whether, on the evidence, the German people in general is specially aggressive, we might give ourselves a preliminary warning, which is necessary only in war-time. When we are at peace, and can therefore think rationally, we all suspect these generalisations about national characteristics, if only because they cancel one another out. All Jews (to be personal) are sometimes said to be greedy business men : or all, alternatively, fanatical revolutionary socialists. The Chinese are the kindest people on earth : but no, they are—see the Press during the Boxer troubles—coldly, devilishly, orientally cruel. “ You can always trust a German ” (on and off for at least a hundred years, and even often from 1919 to 1939, and even Hitler) : “ You can never trust a German ” (now). All Frenchmen are lascivious—look at their horrible pornography : no, they are models of domestic virtue, and the pornography is mostly in English—of a sort—for the pleasure of the British tourist. All Slavs are sadists : all Slavs are mystics. “ The Turk’s ” a gentleman : “ the Turk’s ” a bloodstained monster. The French call sadism “ the English vice ” (and certainly our unique retention of whipping in schools lends some colour to this attribution) : the Germans call it “ the French vice.” “ Perfidious Albion ” has been the catchword of Europe : presumably every reader of this book considers the adjective to be unfair and impertinent. Lord Vansittart tells us in effect, in *Black Record*, that the Germans simply cannot keep their word. But Lord D’Abernon, working daily with them during one of the most difficult of all periods, writes :

" Personally, I regard the Germans as more reliable and more bound by written engagements than many other nations."*

And the very last entry in his Diary is this :

" I am moved . . . by a feeling of real admiration for this people, and by gratitude to all, especially to those with whom I have been in personal contact . . . I have found German statesmen reliable and strong. What higher praise is there ?"†

Bear in mind, also, how easily in war-time we can be persuaded by what is manifestly absurd. Under the heading " The Gentle Wop ! " the *Daily Mirror*, in what is called, I believe, a leaderette of January 19th 1942, warns us against any sympathy with the Italian people. When Mussolini entered the war, we are told, " their dark eyes glistened with the prospect of gain." This of a peasantry which, from Naples to Cape Passero, has been desperately trying for many decades somehow to keep body and soul together. Five days later, the *Daily Telegraph's* gossip man " trust[s] that Mr. Lyttelton's revelations . . . will stop any more attempts to whitewash the Italians in comparison with the Germans." So now it is the Italian " character " as well as the German " character " : because it is Italy as well as Germany with which we are at war.

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Is, then, the German people, *as such*, specially aggressive ? Let me make a plain request. Stop for a moment to remember what sort of people we are talking about. We are talking about the great masses of ordinary, common people : the mother with her baby, the little clerk, the worker at his bench. We all have aggression in us ; but do you really believe that, given even a barely tolerable life : given no cunning appeal to the sense of glory or the sense of fear : given an environment that brings out the best instead of the worst : given the possibility of finding an outlet for his aggression in happy, constructive work and ordinary enjoyment ; do you really believe that, given these, the average Herr Schmidt of Hamburg will be any more likely to satisfy his aggression by starving and murdering and torturing his fellow men than the average Mr. Smith of Clapham ? I cannot think that, if you will put the question honestly to yourself, you will answer that you do.

But we can go beyond this. To go no further back, there is the

* *Op. cit.* III, p. 139.

† *Op. cit.* III, p. 268.

strongest *evidence* that at no time from 1918 to 1939 did the German *people* want war. Here is the testimony of Mr. Philip Noel-Baker, M.P., who was personal assistant to the President of the Disarmament Conference, 1932-1933, and had given close study to the position in Germany :

" But, what was still more important, the bulk of the German people did not resist or resent this Disarmament, so long as they believed that it would be followed by the general disarmament of all. Indeed, there is widespread evidence that the great majority of the German nation welcomed Disarmament and all it meant. They were fully conscious that the sabre-rattling militarism of their Imperial regime had been one of the causes of the war. They were determined that, so far as Germany was concerned, such militarism should be a memory of the past.

" Considering that their Disarmament remained for so long a time one-sided, considering the sufferings and humiliations inflicted on them in the post-war period, there is nothing more remarkable in modern history than the fact that for fourteen years the German people elected Governments who were pledged to the policy of the ' fulfilment ' of the Treaty of Versailles. Up to the day when, by a Palace intrigue, Dr. Brüning fell from power with a majority of the freely elected Reichstag still behind him, the great issue between the Democratic and the Hitler Parties was the armament policy which Germany should pursue. For many years that issue dominated all others in German life. Even when Hitler had come to power, when he had had six weeks to ' arrange ' his first elections, when he had already begun the rearmament his party were pledged to carry through, he still could only win 45 per cent. of the electors' votes, while his Nationalist Allies won only a further 8 per cent. There was not the slightest doubt that still in 1933 the German people were ready to remain disarmed if other nations would disarm as well."*

Noel-Baker is confirmed by D'Abernon (writing in 1929) who was on the spot, and who was, of course, an anti-socialist. After saying that influential groups " of the extreme Right " were not sincerely desirous of peace, he continues : " On the other hand, it is no less true that there are large classes of the population to whom the idea of another war is intensely repugnant. The great mass of workmen organised under the Socialist Party, the majority of the Catholic Party organised under the Centre, a large proportion of the Democratic Party, are undoubtedly sincere in their detestation of war. . . . Taking a broad view, it may

* Philip Noel-Baker, M.P., *The Private Manufacture of Armaments* (London, 1936), p. 521.

be said of the mass of the people that there is a considerable preponderance in favour of peace. . . .'*

Even more remarkable is the evidence for 1933 to 1939. William Shirer has recently published his famous *Berlin Diary*†, covering the years 1934-1940. He is a staunch anti-Nazi; and, not to misrepresent him, in many passages his point of view is similar to Vansittart's. *And he testifies that the German people was overwhelmingly opposed to war:*

Under date September 27th 1938—the eve of Munich:

"A motorized division rolled through the city's streets just at dusk this evening in the direction of the Czech frontier. I went out to the corner of the Linden where the column was turning down the Wilhelmstrasse, expecting to see a tremendous demonstration . . . The hour was undoubtedly chosen to-day to catch the hundreds of thousands of Berliners pouring out of their offices at the end of the day's work. But they ducked into the subways, refused to look on, and the handful that did stand at the curb in utter silence unable to find a word of cheer for the flower of their youth going away to the glorious war. It has been the most striking demonstration against war I've ever seen. Hitler himself reported furious. I had not been standing long at the corner when a policeman came up the Wilhelmstrasse from the direction of the Chancellery and shouted to the few of us standing at the curb that the Führer was on his balcony reviewing the troops. Few moved. I went down to have a look. Hitler stood there, and there weren't two hundred people in the street or the great square of the Wilhelmsplatz. Hitler looked grim, then angry, and soon went inside, leaving his troops to parade by unreviewed. What I've seen to-night almost rekindles a little faith in the German people. They are dead set against war."

September 28th (after the invitation to Chamberlain):

"The people in the streets greatly relieved."

April 23rd 1939:

"They were against going to war."

August 29th 1939 (the eve of war):

"The average German to-day looks dejected. He can't get over the blow of the ration cards, which to him spells war. Last night when Henderson flew back with London's answer to Hitler's demands—on a night when everyone knew the issue of war or peace might be decided—I was amazed to see that less than 500

* *Op. cit.* I, p. 16.

† London, 1941.

people out of a population of 5,000,000 turned out in front of the Chancellery. These few stood there grim and silent. Almost a defeatism discernible in the people. One man remarked to me last night: "The Corridor? Hell, we haven't heard about *that* for twenty years. Why bring it up now?"

Do you see in that man one of the "predatory and bellicose breed" of *Black Record*—or someone very like yourself?

* * * * *

It is also said that "the Germans" will be unable to build a decent, peaceful, progressive society because they are essentially inhumane. Yet the Weimar Constitution has been described as the most democratic the world has ever known: and while it is not only true, but must be insisted, that this constitution became largely a façade, because the problem of power had not been seriously tackled, nevertheless it is absurd to suppose that the German people would have incorporated in it every provision for liberty and humanity, if liberty and humanity had been anathema to them. Again, one could point to the positive achievements of the Republic; here is H. N. Brailsford's description of them:

"The Republic was on the political side a model of free democracy, which respected every civil right, and governed by open discussion and secret voting. During its troubled life this Republic built up a model system of social security, freed education from class, evolved an enviable medical service, did much for housing, gave women an equal status, reformed the criminal law, and in many other ways pioneered for enlightenment and humanity. I touch, much too briefly, on all this, because it suggests that when Germans govern themselves, by talking and voting freely, they ask from life the same good things that appeal to us—not aggrandisement, not domination over others, but social security, equality and well-being in the things of the mind no less than the things of the body. . . . This Germany certainly existed and it reflected something in the German character."*

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All the testimony above quoted is the more encouraging because, vulgar and ridiculous though the Vansittart thesis is, it is true that, as the result of a leavening of the German mass with the Prussian military power, there has been a tendency, during the last 250 years or so, for many Germans to acquire *environmentally*—as they severally grew up and became susceptible to these influences—the Prussian characteristics of military discipline and military obedience: the characteristics of the old Prussia east of the Elbe. (Incidentally, these are characteristics

which, in their hearts, most of our reactionaries greatly admire.) And given the necessary environment, military discipline can easily become for the time being *in anyone* brutality, and military obedience for the time being *in anyone* docility and subservience.

Any such characteristics as the daily routine might produce were reinforced by the conscious State propaganda in praise of war and the *Herrenvolk* which got into its stride after German unification in 1871. This was the propaganda of a national State arriving late on the international scene, and morbidly conscious both that it was strong and that it was *parvenu*. Some of these doctrines were by no means confined to Germany: "jingoism" is an English word and "chauvinism" à French: the history text-books used in the British schools are, or were when I knew them, models of myopic self-esteem; and the "White Man's Burden" and all the Kipling rhodomontade are as offensive as the Kaiser's attitudes. But there were two very great differences. It was rare (but by no means unknown*) for an Englishman, in that period, to preach that war was glorious in and for itself, but a good deal less rare for a German, though still very uncommon except in the ranks of the State apparatus: and the *Herrenvolk* doctrine was here taken for granted, during those years, with a sort of good-humoured insolence, whereas in Germany its preaching was a matter of cold and deliberate State policy. And, biggest difference of all, as against the Prussian tradition of obedience, there was the British tradition of God-damned independence and of "I'm as good as the next man."†

* A very few years ago, a book by a famous Englishman was published glorifying war *as such*; and it did not have a by any means wholly hostile press. About the same time an article expressing similar views appeared in one of our most respectable monthlies.

† Since a good deal has been said about Prussia, it should perhaps be added that the proposal made by many for the division of Prussia from the rest of Germany—for instance, by Thyssen in his *I Paid Hitler*—shows, when *bona fide*, a total misunderstanding. Prussia is important for origins: for actualities it is quite irrelevant. Prussia may to some extent have leavened the lump: it is with the lump—unified Germany—that we have to deal. Still more obnoxious are the suggestions for the splitting up of Germany into a number of separate parts. What could this produce but another struggle for unification—when we have seen that the lateness of her unification is precisely one of the sources of the trouble? The proposal is as silly as the idea that you can solve the problem of modern large-scale industry by a return to the mediæval guilds. You can't reverse the processes of history. The unification, not only of Germany, but of Europe, is historically inevitable. Hitler has partially achieved it by the vilest methods and for the most reactionary end—the enslavement of the others to his own *Herrenvolk*: it is for us to achieve it for freedom, by establishing, in place of the anarchy of competing sovereign States, equal co-operation for the benefit of all under a supra-national authority representative of all.

But if, as the result of environment—to make myself clear, I must repeat “as they severally grow up and become susceptible to these influences”—people acquire certain characteristics, there is only one cure: to change the environment. The only remedy for tyranny and subservience alike is the self-reliant practice of self-government. The holding down of the German people by foreign bayonets, the bolstering up of the reactionary German forces, could only aggravate the trouble. And so, under this head also, we come back to the vital necessity for fostering the German revolution.

Nor, apart altogether from the evidence that has been cited, need we fear that the German working class movement, which, re-formed and largely in arms, must be the leader of the revolution and establish a regime, will run amok: for it will be only too anxious to build its new society, and, in the early stages, it may well be assisted in this task by German “obedience.” “This [new] Germany” in the inspiring words of an Appeal by the Communist Party of Germany, urging the German soldiers not to attack, the German workers to bring the war machine to a standstill, and the German women to demand the return of their husbands, brothers and sons from the front “This Germany will be a country without plutocratic freebooters and fascist marauders, it will be a nation governed by our honest diligent people. It will be a country without unemployment, with the guaranteed right to labour, a country in which the peasant will be able freely to dispose of the products of his labour. This Germany will be a country without fascist barbarity, a country in which man’s abilities and labour, rather than wealth and origin, will determine his position in society. This Germany will be a country freed from the terrible contradictions between the riches of some and the squalid poverty of others. It will be a united Germany, independent and equal among equals. This Germany will live at peace with all nations.”*

Then, as the old Prussian system will have vanished, there will be no influences to produce Prussian characteristics. As for the Germans who already have brutal characteristics when the revolution comes, some will rapidly lose them and others may have to be restrained by the new authority. The history of the Soviet Union shows how rapidly men and women change in a new environment. In 1914, the Russian people were among the most unpolitical in the world: today they are political—in the sense, not of having democratic self-government, but of taking a daily

* This Appeal was found on a German N.C.O. killed in action, and is reproduced in full in *World News and Views* of November 29th 1941.

interest in local affairs—to a degree that would have seemed incredible in 1914.

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It will, I know, be suggested that I am ignoring a crucial question: the indoctrination of the German youth with the Nazi immorality. No; I have thought about it almost every day for many years. But while from one point of view it is impossible to over-estimate the importance of the ideological element in Nazism, from another it can be greatly and dangerously exaggerated.

Before coming to that, however, it may be pointed out that this ideology is not peculiar to Germany: it is or has been taught in practically identical form by the State power in Italy, Spain, Japan, and several countries of East and South-East Europe, as well as by smaller or bigger groups in almost every country except the Soviet Union. What has made it specially dangerous in Hitlerite Germany is, first, the ruthless efficiency with which its teaching has been organised: second, the firmer basis given to it by the glorious-war-and-*Herrenvolk* propaganda of 1871 to 1914, as well as by the defeat of 1918 and all that followed (see Chapter VIII): and third and most important, the power of a colossally strong Germany to impose it on the world.

Its importance cannot be over-estimated, for the following reason.

Man is a creature as yet very precariously balanced between good and evil. All that he has won, in his slow progress from the state of a beast, has not so far brought him, except in a few rare cases, anywhere near the state of an angel. More: his gains during the struggle have been, not indeed counterbalanced, but to some extent diminished, by new evils: for instance, most beasts are naturally and spontaneously cruel, whereas some men are deliberately and consciously so.

The advance of man (which has always been hampered, and is now finally imperilled, by the supremacy of greed as the driving force of our economic arrangements) is primarily due in the West—to speak only of that—to the environment and climate produced by the hardly won and slowly developed Judæo-Hellenic tradition—by the teaching and practice of Socratism, with its passion for objective truth, and of Christianity, with its belief in the sacredness of human personality, and in the right to freedom, which is the corollary. It was in this climate that socialism arose as the highest expression of human aspirations.

This tradition, it must be repeated, is as yet precarious: it has been nurtured with difficulty by the blood of the martyrs and by innumerable tiny thoughts and acts of unknown men and

women, and could easily be lost for generations or perhaps for ever. That is why, when we say that Nazism is a menace to civilisation, we are speaking simple and literal truth: we mean that the gains of two thousand years and more are at stake, and are determined, whatever the immediate cost in blood and torment and treasure, that they shall be preserved. If Hitler were able to conquer the world, to hold it down by a totalitarian regime that made revolt all but impossible, and to condition us all by education and environment, generation after generation, to *believe* in wickedness, then the morality from which this immorality is a revolt might well be altogether forgotten and a new tradition of evil firmly established—until at best slowly, painfully, and with centuries of progress sacrificed, the upward movement started once again. That is why, if Hitler were to succeed on the full scale of his ambitions, he would be, not in any vague or mystical sense but as a matter of historical fact, Antichrist. Of all the reasons for defeating Hitler, this is the chief.

One can think of the present world crisis, the crisis since 1933, in terms of the clock. At a second before twelve, the opposing forces might still be strong enough to prevent Hitler from establishing his tradition: at a second after they might be over-balanced. The Dark Age might have arrived; revolt might henceforth be impossible.

But this is not for a moment to say—and here we come to the possibility of gravely exaggerating the danger—that Hitler has *already* so corrupted the German youth that, *when they get the new environment*, health will not return. No doubt many of these young soldiers, in their present environment and inflamed by war-lust, have for the time being become obscene caricatures of men: no doubt, also, some of them will remain hooligans when the war is over, and will have to be restrained or mercifully killed by their own people. It is also certain that there must be a process of re-education. The important question, however, is: has the German youth as yet been infected beyond hope of recovery?

Shirer's evidence appears to be conclusive. For when he tells us that the German people was, in 1939, overwhelmingly opposed to war, he does not exclude the youth.

It is no reply to say, what Shirer never suggests, that they were opposed to war because they feared they wouldn't win; nor yet that, though they didn't want war, they wanted victory without war, the reward without the struggle. For the very heart and centre of Nazism is a glorification of war *as such*. For six years the most efficient propaganda machine in the world had

tried to persuade the German people that violence, bloodshed, hatred—the act of war, irrespective of its results—must be their pride and their destiny. “In eternal warfare” Hitler had said in *Mein Kampf* “mankind has become great: in eternal peace mankind would be ruined.” And the German people had not believed him.

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Re-education has just been mentioned. What does it mean? In realistic terms, surely nothing but the provision by the new German society of channels through which the hope, the thrust, and the idealism of youth may find a healthy expression. For if the problem of the German youth is complicated, as it is, by the Nazi indoctrination, positively and essentially it is the same as the problem of the youth everywhere: namely, how, amid the monotony of the machine age, to satisfy the sense of adventure, and to satisfy it in a manner beneficial to the whole community. I believe that in the conditions of modern industrialism only a socialist society can solve this problem; and it is significant that, imperfectly socialist though she yet is, the Soviet Union after only twenty-five years is probably the one country of the world in which no serious youth problem exists. Similarly it is German socialism which will re-educate the German youth.

But many people, when they talk about re-education, mean something very different: they write letters to the Vansittart press, suggesting that a body of Englishmen should take up its residence in Germany for a generation or two and dedicate itself to this self-sacrificing task. They would teach the German youth, these people, selflessness and humanity and mercy and thought for others and respect for the common good: but, because we are a democracy, these same people are responsible—“every man Jack, every woman Jack,” as Vansittart says—for conditions in the Indian Empire which we acquired by conquest and for commercial gain, and which we now rule against the wishes of the Indian people. It would be grossly untrue to pretend, as some extremists do, that our rule in India is as bad, or within a million miles of being as bad, as Nazi rule in occupied territories; but the reality is black enough. When Brailsford wrote his book *Rebel India** after a stay there during the autumn and winter of 1930, the average income per head of the population was a little over a shilling a week: the infantile death-rate in Calcutta and Bombay, according to the official figures of six years earlier, was 317 and 417 (out of every thousand born) against 70 for London: and he reckoned that during the early post-war years, for every

* London, 1931.

£100 which the jute mills paid in profits to their shareholders in Scotland they paid £12 in wages to their Indian workers. "The profits of this exploitation," he says—he is speaking generally of British exploitation in India—"under favourable conditions often put a strain on one's powers of belief."

Here is his description of a typical village :

"Round the drinking well of the village I counted five heaps of refuse and dung. In the narrow lanes between the mud walls, there was garbage and stagnant filth. The huts were the usual boxes of mud, without windows or chimneys ; on their flat roofs the people sleep in summer. The open space round which the hamlet clustered was dominated by a shady tree. Under it I took my seat on the bamboo bed which the headman had carried out for my use. In a few minutes the whole male population was squatting round me and answering my questions.

"Three direct inquiries sufficed to outline the condition of this village : the rest was detail. Everyone was in debt ; no one could read : not one of the children attended school. I realised, as the villagers helped me to fill in this sketch, that the entire economic life of the village is based on a pervasive system of debt, from which a man never escapes. To a heritage of debt every baby is born : loaded with debt the emaciated corpse is carried to the funeral pyre. The usual rate of interest is $37\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. . . .

"The children, who never taste milk after they are weaned, were shadows nourished on debts. Most of them had some disease of the eyes or the skin. Many had the swollen belly that indicates a spleen enlarged by malaria, and the limbs of most of them looked like dark sticks fitted to joints.' . . .

"Another man was standing up, to attract my attention. He tore off the long length of cotton cloth which Indians drape round their persons : the dark frame beneath it was gaunt. 'Look, *sahib*, this is the only shred of clothing I possess. I have no change.' It was tattered and threadbare. I asked him what he earned. He had no land, but worked as a labourer on the railway, a State concern, at a wage of sixpence a day of ten hours, without a break for meals. I gathered that his neighbours envied this owner of one shirt, who kept himself, a wife, and two children on sixpence a day."

And here is his description of a typical tannery :

"The tannery stands amid malarious marshes. Inside it, and even outside, heaps of decaying animal refuse poison the air. These dark Tamils work all but naked, for they must stand up to the waist in the vats among the hides, their skins alternately burned and tanned by the lime and tannic acid. Their hands are

coated with human leather as thick as the sole of a shoe. Among them are boys of ten and twelve, and all of them, boys and men alike, work twelve hours a day, three-hundred-and-sixty-five days in the year. Mills have the protection of a most inadequate Factory Act, loosely enforced by an understaffed corps of inspectors. But to works which use no mechanical power the Act does not apply.

"In huts and sheds built with their own hands, among the garbage and the skins, these workers cook and sleep all the year round. In one of these tumble-down shelters, which measured about 23 feet by 18 feet, as many as thirty were housed. Even that was not the worst of these dwellings. Against the wall of one of the tanning-sheds I noticed a lean-to, which I mistook at first for a toolhouse. But its door was open, and through it I saw three beds. The floor was of earth, and measured 12 feet by 7 feet: it was not quite 3 feet high. In this den three human beings were housed.

"The owner of this tannery was an Indian. But the landlord of the greater part of this squalid suburb was an institution known as the Bombay Improvement Trust, an immensely wealthy semi-official corporation, run by Englishmen. For the hovels outside the tannery it drew a monthly rent of 5s. These ramshackle structures had tiled roofs and walls of galvanised iron (imagine it in this climate), which the tenants had improved by cutting up kerosene tins. These black holes were 10 feet square, with a small verandah, and each housed from six to eight persons. There were three water taps for about 400 persons, and six stinking privies at a distance of 200 yards. It was growing dark as I left this place, in imminent danger of slipping on the green slime into an open drain. Among the refuse heaps the great rats were already hurrying. . . ."

And this is what he has to say of the workshops in general :

"The great majority, however, of the workshops in India escape control entirely, either because they are too small to come under the Factory Acts, or because they use no mechanical power. In these over ten millions out of India's 11,800,000 industrial workers are employed. Some are permanent, like the 'wealthy carpet factory in Amritsar, which, as the manager told me, produces only articles of luxury 'for Maharajahs and American millionaires.' Here boys, aged about eight, worked in the deep shade, which must have strained their eyes severely, through an 11-hour day, for 2½d. They are virtually slaves, bought from their parents by the foremen for a lump sum at the outset of their careers. In some of the seasonal factories, e.g., in some

cotton ginneries, it is rumoured that a continuous 18-hour day is sometimes worked."

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The best contribution we can make to the general cause of re-education is to re-educate ourselves.

CHAPTER VII.—HATRED AND REVENGE

I cannot tell whether I have succeeded or failed, so far, in making out my case. But to those whom I have not convinced I want to make one appeal.

Apart altogether from the cooler reasoning of Lord Vansittart and some of his followers, there is growing up in sections of the Press a savage appeal to primitive blood-lust, and a base propaganda of hatred and revenge against the German people. Here are a few specimens, taken from various newspapers :*

"TERROR FOR THEM

. . . There is only one way open to us to clean and purify the minds of Germans still dreaming of victory, still completely remorseless in their ideas of attaining it. That is by bombing not sense but fear into them.

A taste of what they ordered for other people, a terror that still more is coming, will break Germany . . ."

"HORRIBLE DEATH

Europe yet will wreak vengeance on these Germans. They, too, will die and die horribly."

"THE GERMANS DESERVE TO BE HATED

. . . If you ask my view—Should brotherly love continue? After this war should we all work to rebuild Germany? And so forth—I am quite incapable of discussing and defining such fine points. All I know is . . . that I hate their guts. . . .

Let brotherly love continue, my brothers: but let us understand WHO are of the brotherhood. . . .

I myself made a mistake thinking that we could ever be friends with these Germans. Why make mistakes unless one learns?

Holding firmly that while there is peace nothing so becomes a man as to maintain it, I did what little I could in upholding the

* The words in capitals are headlines or subheads.

ever-glorious campaign of Neville Chamberlain for appeasement with Hitler. . . .

But if you ask me : ' Do I hate the Germans ? ' I will answer you with a question : ' Name the man, name the nation, quote me one human being who (not being a German) loves the Germans ? '

Never in all history was such retributive hate being stored up as is now for the sanguinary Hun.

Whatever may be the declarations of the Atlantic Conference, I guess the Germans' earth will yet be scorched."

" ' An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth ' is not always a sound or a just law. But it is the only law suitable for Germans when the bloodlust is in them. The sooner we apply it to them, without squeamishness, and with steel in our hearts . . .

This war is a national business. Not just the business of those who have to go and put on uniforms.

NOT ENOUGH HATE

. . . You can't win a war like this without hating your enemy."

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Perhaps I shall be told that this hatred is but a natural reaction, the result of sympathy with Hitler's victims. I do not doubt the sincerity of these writers ; but the deepest pity for human suffering produces emotions very different from these.

To what a degree a no doubt honourable man may be betrayed by the passions of war is shown by a letter in the Sunday Press. The writer, after the usual congratulations " on the robust realism of your recent leading articles," recalls how in 1918 " harrowing stories of starvation, malnutrition, and so on *ad nauseum*" induced " kindly but misguided people " to give money to save German babies. He continues :

" What has been the result of this most misplaced charity ?

" The babies of those days, thus saved from rickets and other disabling child diseases, are the young Germans of the present day whose lust and bestiality have turned a large part of Europe into a creditable imitation of the infernal regions."

I beg and implore you to set your faces and your hearts against this propaganda of hatred. It is bad because it clouds judgment ; it is bad because it prevents us from solving the common problems of our poor humanity in the light of such reason as is given to us : but above all it is bad simply because it is bad. In a world in which there is so much evil, any refraining from evil impulses is a conquest, though none may ever know of

it and though it may have no result that anyone can ever measure.

In war, and in this war of wars, we cannot keep our hands clean ; we must kill and torment the flesh of our brothers, lest liberty, and the capacity of man to rise above his animal nature, should perish utterly from the earth. But we can keep our hearts pure ; and by as much as we fail to do so, by as much as we hate, by just so much does Hitler win.

There comes into my mind the story of a German concentration camp. I must explain that the Day of Atonement is the most holy day in the Jewish calendar ; on it an extreme of ritual purity and physical cleanliness is imposed, and any impurity or uncleanness is considered by a pious Jew to be a grave sin. On a Day of Atonement before the war the S.S. men took a Jewish Rabbi in one of the concentration camps and whipped him ; then they led him out into the yard, where they had built up a pile of human excrement, and forced him knee-deep into it ; and they put his praying shawl on him, and soiled the fringes of it, which are its most sacred part, with the dung ; and that for him was an outrage even worse than the pain and shame of the whipping. Then they said to him : " Now, Jew, preach to us on this Day of Atonement about the Jewish religion." It may be that he heard an echo of those other words " Now prophesy," spoken two thousand years before to another Jewish Rabbi ; or it may be that he found in his own nature the strength to do what he did. For he said : " Meine Freunde '—my friends, to the S.S. men who had tormented him—" My friends, the fundamental principle of the Jewish religion, as of all the other religions of the world, is : Love thy neighbour as thyself." ... a good Jew, a good Christian, and, best of all for our purposes, a good socialist.

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In a recent lecture I said very much what I have written above. The reaction was not unanimously favourable, to judge from the letters received during the following few days. I was accused of being sentimental, unrealistic, and self-righteous, or alternatively of being deficient in moral sense. I was also asked to explain more clearly what I meant. Did I mean that it was wrong to hate the Nazi atrocities in Poland and Russia ? Or wrong to hate the German people ? Or wrong to hate the Nazis ? Or wrong, perhaps, even to hate Hitler ?

Of course I do not mean that it is wrong to hate Nazi crimes : there can be no hatred too intense for them, as well as for the crimes of those others, German and non-German, who for their own self-interest and sometimes directly for their own financial

profit made it possible, with their eyes wide open, for Hitler to do what he has done. The absence of any widespread hatred for Nazi abominations was, indeed, one of the most shameful features of the pre-war period; just as, until the other day, people were in general quite unconcerned about Japanese outrages against China, which, if possible, have been even more appalling than Hitler's against the conquered peoples of Europe. But it seems curious that otherwise reasonable people should have forgotten that to hate what a man has done need not and should not involve hatred of the man himself.

I am told that such a differentiation may be theoretically correct, but is in practice impossible. The most obvious example will show that this is not so. If a congenital idiot commits a peculiarly atrocious murder, all of us, except the specially insensitive, are horrified by his act; but none of us, except the specially ignorant and uncivilised, hate the man who did it. On the contrary, we recognise that, both in law—it was not always so—and in commonsense, he is not responsible; and the worse his crime the greater our pity. Here is a human being, we think, from whom fate has taken his birthright of humanity: and if we are wise and know our own hearts, we add "There, but for the grace of God, go I". I am not here, or yet, considering the whole broad question of men's responsibility for their conduct, or the narrower one of the Nazis for theirs: I am merely showing that we have learned—it has been part of the process of civilisation—to react differently towards the criminal and his crime.

As for the rest of the questions put by my correspondents, I do not think it wrong to hate the German people: I do think it wrong to hate the Nazis: and I do think it wrong to hate Hitler. Nothing further need, perhaps, be said about the impropriety of hating the German people; if that is not agreed, then clearly the writing of this book has been a wasted effort. But something may be added about Hitler and the Nazis.

Leaving aside, for the moment, the question of responsibility for conduct, we can at once make a clear differentiation between hatred and punishment. Every parent and every judge knows that punishment should not involve hatred: hatred, at best, is irrelevant to punishment—something additional, something personal and subjective, brought into play and given its opportunity by the action of the culprit or in the act of punishment: or, at worst and more frequently, it perverts the punishment and robs it of any beneficial effect it might otherwise have had. For, as we have become a little more civilised, we have gradually come to understand that punishment has two objectives, and two alone, which are socially fruitful: to protect our common society, and

so to reform the criminal that he may become a useful member of it. Vengeance has nothing in common with these objectives, and is normally incompatible with them : when we take revenge, we are either seizing a respectable occasion for giving the rein to our own sadistic impulses, or are seeking relief from a tormenting conscience by externalising and trying to annihilate our own guilt. As for "retribution," it can have a place in a rational scheme of punishment only as a deterrent—only if and in so far as it restrains men by the fear of consequences, and so protects society. But usually it is but the more polite face of vengeance ; and both are motivated by hatred. It were wise to mistrust our own motives to the point of including retribution with vengeance when we repeat " Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord ".

If hatred is totally irrelevant to any socially fruitful purposes of punishment, then it cannot suddenly become relevant, as some appear to imagine, when the crime to be punished is a specially atrocious one. The punishment to be inflicted may be of a different order ; but the hatred remains irrelevant. To protect society, it may be necessary to kill Hitler and quite a number of others (we shall come to that) at the end of the war, whereas we no longer consider it necessary, as we did only quite a few years ago, to kill a man for stealing a sheep. But it is the protection of society that dictates the difference in the respective punishments ; hatred does not come into the matter.

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This question of hatred and punishment has been briefly dealt with, because some of my correspondents appear to assume that if you don't believe in hatred then necessarily you don't believe in punishment, and because, also, we shall have to consider punishment in itself, and it was therefore desirable to clear the ground by differentiating it from hatred. But before coming to that an attempt must be made to answer the larger question : why, whatever we may think about punishment, is it wrong to hate Hitler and the Nazis (and now the fascists of Japan) ?

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The life of man in society is a ceaseless struggle between two opposing impulses : the impulse for the assertion of self and the impulse for co-operation with others. Of the two, self-assertion is far the stronger : indeed, it seems probable that the limiting and opposing impulse of co-operation is originally, in the life both of the race and of every individual, itself a form of self-assertion. This conflict of impulses, while properly susceptible to theoretical analysis, may be regarded for our present purpose as a fact, of

which we are aware, each one of us, by the immediacy of our own personal experience.

The impulse of self-assertion takes many forms, but all of them spring from the same quest: the quest to gratify ourselves, to win the maximum pleasure and happiness for ourselves, by the simple, the literally childish expedient of seeking immediate gratification, immediate pleasure, immediate happiness. Literally childish, both in the racial and individual senses. We come into the world, no doubt, very much in our own despite: and over against us we find impersonal nature and our fellow victims, who would seem to be there if not with the sole purpose then certainly with the sole effect of thwarting or limiting what can alone have meaning for us, the gratification of our own ego. And so we aggress, attack, desire to kill, imagining that by these expedients we can win happiness. Or we lust to destroy the whole scheme of things that hampers our thrusting egoism. Or, perhaps most fundamental of all, we would destroy ourselves, and so return to the womb from which it had been better, we feel, that we should never have been delivered. Self-assertion, in a word, becomes destructiveness.

To remove our fellow men from our path: to get power over them, dominate them, enslave them, kill them: it is to this that, in relation to their bodies, our impulse of self-assertion prompts us, if neither sublimated nor balanced or conquered by the impulse of co-operation. In the mental sphere, fanaticism, jealousy, meanness, personal family national or racial arrogance, lack of objectivity, and contempt for science and truth, are among its most obvious manifestations.

Hatred of persons is of the very essence of self-assertion. What happens when we hate a man? Perhaps his very existence, or his better brains or finer looks or more fortunate circumstances, seem to threaten, or actually do threaten, our happiness and sense of power. We desire to remove him; this desire becomes self-conscious in hatred, and the hatred at once excuses the desire and intensifies it. Or perhaps he really has deliberately wronged us: he has used his own power against us, and diminished ours. He therefore becomes a peculiarly suitable object for our own aggression: we hate and wish to injure him. Or, to come to that of which we are now thinking, he has done unspeakable injury not to ourselves but to others, even perhaps to those "who live far away and of whom we know very little." Is hatred of a different character in such a case? Not at all. By hating him we cannot benefit by a jot or tittle either his victims or the world. By forcibly restraining him, certainly: by punishing him, perhaps: but how conceivably by hating him? If therefore we hate him it

can only be because in so doing we gratify ourselves, enhance *our own* sense of power over a fellow creature, give the rein to *our own* aggressiveness. We use the evil in him as a justification for no longer making the effort to restrain *our own*. I don't know whether I shall be understood when I say that, for this reason, hatred of a very bad man seems to me more disgusting than hatred of a rather bad one, and hatred of the rather bad worse than hatred of the comparatively innocent.

The case is very different with hatred of evil actions, of crimes rather than of criminals. For now we are hating the self-assertion which caused the crime, and which causes crimes in us as well as in others. Far from enhancing our own sense of power over our fellow men, we are facing the consequences of self-assertion and so helping ourselves to restrain it in our own persons. To hate the criminal is to increase the amount of self-assertion in the world ; to hate the crime is to diminish it.

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If self-assertion had been, or had remained, the only impulse in men social life would have been impossible : there could have been nothing but an annihilating destructiveness. But the other impulse was there, or developed : the impulse for co-operation with others. Civilisation was, or became, a possibility. But always, owing to the strength of self-assertion, only *just* a possibility : a hazardous experiment which might very well, and may still, end in complete failure.

So far as human relationships are concerned (and apart from the conquest of nature, the creation of art, the acquisition of scientific knowledge, and so on) civilisation can develop only by the progressive encroachment of the area of co-operation over the area of self-assertion and destructiveness. This encroachment becomes the more necessary as the world becomes physically unified : success in what may be called the mechanics of civilisation—the conquest of nature—demands a corresponding success on the side of human relationships. At first co-operation in the family could suffice, and then co-operation in the tribe : but to-day nothing can save us but co-operation over the whole surface of the inhabited globe. That is one of the reasons (there is another to which we shall come) why we are now facing what may well be the supreme crisis of civilisation.

It is unnecessary to consider the origins of the impulse for co-operation, and whether it stems from self-assertion or is essentially independent of it. Fancies (which may be facts) about, for instance, the murder of a primæval father, and the subsequent co-operation of the guilty sons who did the murder, will always captivate those who seek "to know the causes of things," but

they are irrelevant for our present purpose. It may be that the starting point was sexual love, which is in impulse aggressive or subservient to aggression but by its very nature involves co-operation and finds its climax in complete unity. Or it may be that something rational in men made them understand that uncontrolled aggression—the childish determination to seek happiness always by the immediate gratification of the ego—must lead, not to happiness, but to misery and, ultimately, annihilation. However that may be, we are aware by our own experience that the impulse exists, and those of us who are heirs to the liberal, Western, or Christian tradition take as axiomatic, as “given” (however imperfectly our actions are thereby influenced), the “goodness” of this impulse which rational analysis shows to be socially fruitful. The supreme value of a healthy tradition is that it enables the accumulated findings of wisdom and common-sense to be taken for granted, and so facilitates further advances on the basis of these findings. If for that reason alone, the preservation of the liberal or Christian tradition is of crucial importance.

Just as hatred may be called aggression in the mind or spirit, so may love be called co-operation in the mind or spirit. Hatred is an emotion by which we both justify our desire to aggress and intensify it: love an emotion by which we both justify our desire to co-operate and, again, intensify it. It seems probable that this emotion is experienced as an extension of, or at any rate by analogy with, sexual love. Freud, an old gentleman by no means given to sentimentality, describes the whole impulse for co-operation by the Greek word for sexual love, Eros.

Freud, by the way, has a striking passage in perhaps his most remarkable and certainly his grimmest book, *Civilisation and its Discontents*.^{*} How, he asks in effect, could anyone have said anything so preposterous as “Love thy neighbour as thyself”—or, still more preposterous, “Love thine enemies”—and have hoped to “get away with it”? For these exhortations are flatly opposed to men’s deepest and strongest instincts—to love oneself and precisely not one’s neighbour and still less one’s enemy, to assert oneself, to regard everything from the angle of one’s own pleasure and gratification. And he tries to reply—he succeeds with difficulty, for all the time he is fighting against his own conclusion: “It is just because the conduct demanded is not merely a modification of, but directly opposed to, man’s strongest instinct that it had to be demanded. Only if men

^{*} London, 1930. This chapter owes a good deal to that book, though my conclusions are very different.

attacked the inner fortress, the Holy of Holies, of barbarism—their own self-assertion and destructiveness—could civilisation be possible.”

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By as much as any one of us allows himself to feel hatred for any person, however evil (and the more evil he is the worse the result of our hatred, as we shall see), by just so much does he enlarge the total area of destructiveness, aggression, and self-assertion, and by just so much does he add to the peril of civilisation. This consideration is of supreme importance at the present moment, both because civilisation is fighting for its life as never before, and because such a wave of hatred, violence and blood-lust threatens to engulf the world that not even the smallest pebble can be spared from any rampart that may be erected in its path. But there is a further reason, and it is the most important and the most final of all.

When we say that civilisation is fighting for its life, we are using the words in a precise and literal sense. The problem of civilisation, as we have seen, is the problem of increasing the area of co-operation and diminishing the area of self-assertion. But you can consider man's fate from another point of view. You can say "The problem of civilisation is insoluble. The impulse of self-assertion is too strong: that of co-operation too weak. Let us, therefore, abandon the experiment of civilisation altogether. Let us find our solution for humanity in deliberately diminishing the area of co-operation and increasing that of self-assertion. Let us *consecrate* self-assertion. Let us build a world society in which a small group of a single race—and themselves the extension of a single man—dominate, rule, enslave, use as instruments for their own gratification, all the rest. Away with Eros: get stability, not by civilisation, but by enthroning, 'for a thousand years,' the self-assertion of the strong."

This is what Hitler is trying to do: and he is trying to do it with spiritual as well as with material weapons. The conversion of the humanity of Poland into chattels for his *Herrenvolk*—which means for the ruling groups of his *Herrenvolk*—is the physical side of the picture; the spiritual side is the totalitarian inculcation of the Nazi ideology, with its glorification of blood and race and arrogance and physical strength, its contempt for reason and science and equal justice and objective truth, and above all with its cult of hatred and its detestation of pity and mercy and humility and all the little humanities of decent average men and women. But it is in the apotheosis of Death—of the destruction of others, of self-destruction—that the Nazi ideology crystallises. Here is humanity loathing itself, unwilling

to continue the struggle, deliberately choosing the path of self-annihilation

We have to fight Hitler with material weapons ; but we have to fight him with spiritual weapons also. For the appeal of the Nazi way of life is dangerously compelling, the disease terribly contagious, just because the call is to what has always been the deepest and still is the strongest impulse in our common human nature. If we listen to this call, civilisation is lost. We have to build ramparts, each one of us : and the strongest rampart on the spiritual plane, which is at least as important as the physical, is not to hate. And it is in the citadel that we must come to grips with the enemy : it is Hitler himself whom we must refuse to hate, in despite and because of his own desire. I will go so far as to say that we should pity him, this man who has shamed his humanity.

Because Hitler has increased so terribly the amount of hatred in the world, it is for us to restore the balance : and because *he* has increased it, and "we can resist anything except temptation," to hate *him* is precisely the temptation we must resist.

One of my socialist correspondents tells me "Of course it is right to hate the Nazis. Nine years ago I thought it wrong to hate anybody : but I now know that that's academic." This is simply to say that Hitler has claimed another victim : that is what I meant when I wrote earlier "by just as much as we hate, by just so much does Hitler win." And when this correspondent goes on to say "If I prayed I should pray that he might be blown to pieces. If he is, I hope it hurts him a lot before he dies," then the Nazi triumph is complete. In nine short years a decent man, a man who still devotes his life to the cause of the common people, has succumbed to Hitler to the point of desiring for his own gratification—for what other motive, in all the circumstances, can there conceivably be?—that a fellow man should die *in agony*.

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Is all this "sentimental" and "unrealistic," as some of those who have written to me suggest ? The boot is surely, as the saying is, on the other leg. It is the haters that are sentimental or emotional, for it is to their most primitive and strongest emotions that they give the rein. Those who plead for the restraint of these emotions, because in abandonment to them they see nothing but destruction and death : those who insist that we must look beyond immediate gratification, and must guard ourselves even now as instruments for giving life to ourselves and others : these are the starkest, the most unsentimental of realists. It is indeed a Nazi triumph that to luxuriate in hatred should be regarded as realistic, and not to do so as sentimental.

But after all, I am told, it is "natural" to hate your enemy, and especially such an enemy as Hitler. Of course it is: it is also "natural" to lie and steal and cheat and rape and to do all sorts of other things commonly regarded as incompatible with civilisation.

Why is it that so many decent people are shamefaced about advocating good things—which only means sensible, constructive, life-giving things—while the less decent are not in the least shamefaced about advocating bad? Is it, I wonder, something to do with a connection, in this Christian country, between the good things and Christianity? A man will read a dozen volumes of Freud without thinking them "sentimental": but if you venture to express the essence of them by repeating Rabbinu Jesus ben Joseph's apophthegm—"Father, forgive them for they know not what they do"—he gets hot under the collar. It is a perplexing mystery.

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As for the supposed self-righteousness of this attitude, I plead not guilty. It is those of us who know our own hearts best, who are most conscious of our own evil impulses, that will be most anxious to call a halt to aggression and hatred. I am also told that, if I were living for instance in Poland, and if my wife and children had been tormented and outraged by the Nazis, I should feel very differently. Maybe; and certainly nothing could be more pharisaical than to condemn people who, in such circumstances, let their passions get the better of them. But because, similarly placed, one might oneself hate, that is not to say that one would be right in doing so; and hatred on the Continent (which, as the report quoted previously shows, can be overcome by international working class solidarity) is all the more reason for those who, so far, have not intolerably suffered to resist the temptation of adding to it.

If you want a bad name for this point of view, call it, not self-righteousness, but pride. As a human being, I will not be beaten in the fortress of my humanity by Hitler: I refuse to hate him. And as the Jews are the special object of his hatred, as a Jew I doubly refuse.

CHAPTER VIII—GUILT AND PUNISHMENT: I—WAR GUILT

Hatred and vengeance apart, what about punishment of the guilty? For if punishment is more often than not the occasion and even the mask of hatred and vengeance, essentially it has

nothing to do with these, but on the contrary has a valuable part to play, as we have seen, in the life of a civilised community. Is it not applicable, then, in the sphere of international as well as of national life? And if so, should it not have a foremost place among our war-aims?

This is a question which is being increasingly asked, and answered as often in the affirmative. By "punishment" is meant punishment other than the punishment of complete defeat—namely, judicial punishment, punishment after some kind of trial—inflicted by the victors (ourselves) on the vanquished: and by guilt is meant war-guilt, guilt for causing or launching war, and atrocity-guilt, guilt for ordering or committing atrocities.

I shall deal in this chapter with war-guilt, and in the next with atrocity-guilt: and in both I shall attempt to show that the growing pre-occupation with, and propaganda for, judicial punishment involves dangers so great that no hypothetical advantages can counterbalance them. And every advantage is hypothetical: even the greatest, that of building up a sense of international morality. For, even if the almost insuperable difficulties could in practice be overcome, how could a sentence passed by victors on vanquished present itself to the common sense of mankind as other than prejudiced and *ex parte*?

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In the matter of war-guilt (as contrasted with atrocity-guilt), who are the guilty?

If the argument of the earlier part of this book is correct, the *fundamental* "guilt" for the war does not attach to a man, or a clique, or a people, or even a class: it attaches to a universal way of life. The argument may have been rejected by the reader, in which case I would ask him to finish this chapter before coming to a final conclusion: but if it has been accepted, the deductions which follow from it must be accepted also.

Everywhere in the world, except since 1917 in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the exploitation of nature—the production of the necessities by which we live and the good things by which we enjoy life—has been regulated by greed and self-interest: by the motive of maximum personal gain, and not by rational planning in the equal interest of everyone in the community and of all communities. The result has been the development, in the twentieth century, of monopoly capitalism, finance capitalism and Imperialism: and the mere existence of Imperialism, first and most important, has directly and of itself involved a headlong drive to great international wars; secondly, has sometimes heightened and always facilitated the aggression,

whether economic in impulse or not, of those specially predisposed to it ; and thirdly, has made it impossible to devise any workable machinery by which aggression could be controlled. It is in Imperialism that the ultimate origin of the present war is to be found.

Every one of us, therefore, is " guilty " : every Englishman, every German, every Frenchman, every Pole : or, if you prefer, no one of us is guilty. Capitalists in general are in one sense " guiltier " than the masses of ordinary people, for it is they who have had the power to cause, often without the smallest desire to do so, such appalling evil. But they have been *given* the power ; and they too have lived and acted in accordance with standards recognised by their society. Even the capitalist who quite deliberately ruins thousands by cornering a market is the product of an environment in which we have all acquiesced. Better, perhaps, not to say either that all or none are guilty : better just to say that we are all in the same boat.

The understanding of this essential fact is of such supreme importance that we dare not allow any secondary considerations to cloud it. To forget for a moment the general guilt is to run the risk, to put it no higher, of diverting energy from the one task from which no atom of energy can be spared : the task of superseding finance capitalism by international socialism, and thus of encouraging brotherhood and co-operation instead of putting a premium on greed and aggression. Casualties in the last war are said to have exceeded forty million : no one knows what the toll of this one will be before it is finished. Which is wiser—to think only of striking at the roots of war, of rebuilding our foundations so that war becomes, not alas impossible but at least no longer all but inevitable—or to lose even a little of our whole-heartedness in the prosecution of that task ? And in practice the danger is far greater than that : the danger is of being permanently side-tracked from the real objective.

* * * *

I have said that all, or none, are guilty. Many will, I know, feel unsatisfied by that statement. Granted, it will be said, that broadly and ultimately Imperialism is responsible : granted that, even more ultimately, men's greed and self-seeking, their inability to organise their national and international relations on any basis except that of private gain, is the enemy : nevertheless Hitler and his Nazis are surely guilty in a special, more direct, more immediate, more heinous sense, for, while the rest of us may have acquiesced in a system which made war inevitable, they quite consciously *wanted* war, quite coldly planned it, quite deliberately plunged the world into all its unspeakable horrors.

I agree that Hitler wanted war and was determined, if he could, to get it : for three years, from 1936 to 1939, some of us spent night after night in the towns and villages of England, warning a careless public of the peril that threatened, and pleading in vain for the understanding with the Soviet Union which alone could have saved us. While we were doing this, many of the present apostles of Vansittartism were telling us what a gentleman Hitler was, how avid of peace, what a valuable bulwark against the horrors of Bolshevism. There is little indeed that we can be told about Hitler and fascism : we knew it all in 1933 and long before. But when special and immediate guilt are in question, then we take leave to ask : how immediate ? And if we answer with the truth, that is not because we enjoy telling it, but because concealment of past evil may mean its future repetition, and because, too, those who love England best would wish to see her, not self-righteous, but the leader, as she can be, in international brotherhood. Moreover, we may justly plead this in extenuation of our own special and immediate guilt : that it arose from our acceptance of what has been the general norm of twentieth-century behaviour.

FROM 1918 TO 1933

Let us go back no more than twenty-three years. In 1919 we deliberately "crippled" a nation of sixty million souls : as deliberately as Hitler launched the present war. And we did so because she was "one of our chief trade competitors." Read again Mr. Lloyd George's remark, already quoted :

"The truth is that we have got our way. We have got most of the things we set out to get . . . The German navy has been handed over, and the German colonies have been given up. One of our chief trade competitors has been most seriously crippled, and our Allies are about to become her biggest creditors. That is no small achievement."

D'Abernon might almost be directly commenting on this passage when he writes "Whatever may be thought of the Versailles Treaty, judged from a European standpoint, there can be no question as to the achievement of Lloyd George as an English advocate." *

We "most seriously crippled" German industry by depriving it of three-fourths of its iron ore and one-third of its coal, and by reparations that turned out to be a curse not only to Germany but to all the world. But Germany, if she had won, would have done

* *Op. cit.*, I, p. 38.

even worse? Almost certainly: but how in a world even of rational school-children could that be relevant?

The Franco-British policy of Versailles, which was a very model of Imperialism in the sense explained in earlier chapters, laid the first foundations of 1939, and laid them firmly. Even if it had produced no immediate catastrophe it must in the long run have increased the tension of 1900-1914: for if Germany's late arrival on the industrial scene and her consequent explosiveness had caused the first world war, to bottle her up still further could only be the reverse of a solution. But Versailles did produce an immediate catastrophe: it produced in Germany, four years later, the nightmare extreme of inflation, and it did so in spite of the developing split between Britain and France, and our unsuccessful attempts to modify, in our own interest (and in accordance also with the changing mood of the British public, which, when war passions have subsided and unless deliberately inflamed, is not given to vindictiveness), a policy which we had helped to initiate.

The split developed between Britain and France because "we"—the "interests", the "statesmen", the men of that hard-faced Parliament of 1918—were discovering that, from the British point of view, the policy "didn't pay." Read the Diaries of Lord D'Abernon, from which quotations have already been given: that cultured financier, so clever, so well-meaning, so totally blind to social and economic actualities, and above all so fearful of Bolshevism, lays bare quite unconsciously the mechanism of the modern world. You see the tension reaching a point at which Poincaré, having invited Mr. Lloyd George to meet him at Boulogne, left the Prime Minister of Great Britain to order his own luncheon at the railway station, while he had his at the Sous-Préfecture. You watch our growing realisation that "France" is determined not merely to ruin Germany, but to establish a hegemony over all Europe; and that would not do at all, first because it would mean to have exchanged one challenge for another, and secondly because it must drive Germany into the arms of Russia. "Anyone who supposes," says D'Abernon, "that a French Government dominating the Continent as Napoleon dominated it after Tilsit will remain friendly to England must be a poor judge of national psychology. No more foolish expectation could be entertained. It is equally improbable, under such circumstances, that we should be friendly to France. Desiring the maintenance of the Anglo-French Entente, I am compelled to desire the existence of a strong Germany."*

* *Op. cit.*, II, p. 239.

And so we began to side with Germany against France : but France had her way long enough to cement the foundations of 1939.

Poincaré, the evil genius of the post-war years, but as much the product of his environment as Hitler is of his : Poincaré, " blind to any interest other than that of France in the narrowest sense . . . intransigence itself " :* Poincaré and the heavy industrialists of France wanted several interlocking things for several interlocking reasons. They wanted the coal of the Ruhr—the very basis of German industry—so that they might make super-profits by wedding it to the iron-ore of Lorraine : and they wanted it, too, so that they might smash Germany and rule Europe. They wanted to smash Germany and rule Europe for the sake both of profits and of security : and they wanted security both for its own sake and for the sake of the profits. As for security—and they had suffered pitifully from lack of it—they could think of it only in terms of holding down their strongest rival ; and that is how we are beginning to think of it too. " The student of history in the future " says D'Abernon, writing in April 1923 " may find an analogy between the policy of Germany before 1914 and the policy of France to day. The truth is that this attitude is characteristic of any Power which happens to be militarily predominant for the moment."†

So Poincaré planned the final destruction of Germany. He planned it deliberately, again as deliberately as Hitler planned the present war. His policy was simple, subtle, and devilish. He just opposed the slightest loosening of the reparations screw, which we began to urge. He wanted it both ways ; and he got it. Germany would attempt to make the impossible payments : that would be the first stage of her ruin. She would fail : Poincaré would seize the Ruhr and make the Rhineland occupation permanent, and would so complete the process that reparations had begun.

Do I read into Poincaré's policy a far-fetched machiavellianism which did not in fact exist ? No : I could give you a dozen quotations from D'Abernon to prove my point. Here is one, dated July 27th 1923 : " It is impossible not to be impressed by the determination of the dominant circle in France to obtain territorial, military and economic advantages, rather than to be paid reparations. That has been the real objective. The reparation claims put forward were so excessive, so obviously beyond possibility of fulfilment, that politicians as clear-sighted as the French

* D'Abernon, *op. cit.* II, pp. 22 23.

† *Op. cit.* II, p. 186.

can only have presented them in the hope of obtaining, through their refusal, a right to exact penalties . . . it hardly admits of doubt."*

But we have more direct testimony—Poincaré's own. This is what he said on June 26th 1922 :

" So far as I am concerned, it would pain me if Germany were to pay ; then we should have to evacuate the Rhineland. Which do you regard as better, the obtaining of cash or the acquisition of new territory ? I for my part prefer the occupation and the conquest to the money of reparations. Hence you will comprehend why we need a powerful army and vigilant patriotism ; you will comprehend that the sole means of saving the Treaty of Versailles is to arrange matters in such a way that our defeated enemies cannot fulfil its conditions."

Poincaré got his Ruhr occupation : and that put the finishing touch to inflation. Reparation payments were already making it impossible to hold the mark . money in Germany was becoming comparatively worthless. When the Ruhr was seized, masters and workers alike quite properly refused to work the industries : and as the consequently unemployed had somehow or other to be kept alive, it was full steam ahead with the printing of paper currency. Money became, for practical and immediate purposes, almost absolutely worthless : in November 1923 it took ten billion marks to buy a single dollar. The misery was indescribable. A wheelbarrow full of paper was required to make a trifling purchase : anyone living on a fixed income was ruined : a worker who had been paid at four o'clock found at five that he could buy nothing with his wages : life was a perpetual nightmare to everyone except those with sufficient capital to hold on and gamble on the exchange. Poincaré was succeeding.

The despair of the inflation was to leave its mark on the whole German people : bear it in mind when you think of 1933. And bear it in mind, too, if you have felt inclined to doubt whether, whatever may be thought of 1914, this war too must be described as imperialist in ultimate origin.

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After all this—after the literally irreparable damage had been done—it was the British policy that was to succeed : our industrialists' policy of "fattening up Germany" as an offset to France and as the goose that was to lay the golden eggs of reparations, a policy which coincided with the growing desire of the British public to give Germany a "fair deal." Under the Dawes

plan of 1924 money was lent to Germany for the reconstruction of her industries : and from this point the country was inundated with a stream of foreign capital, governmental and private, and predominantly American. The advantage for the creditors was manifold. There was the interest on the loan ; there were reparations from the profits of the reviving industries ; and there was direct participation by the foreign capital in those profits. And for a time all seemed well.

But do not fail to note that while the Dawes policy was far more intelligent for immediate purposes than the Poincaré madness, it was a policy of *ad hoc* intelligent exploitation and not of far-sighted aid for the equal benefit of Germany and the world. " During the middle 'twenties " writes Dr. Einzig* " the luxury hotels of Berlin and other leading German cities were always crowded with representatives of American issuing houses offering loans to potential German borrowers and competing recklessly with each other in order to secure the business. Never before in the history of modern finance was it so easy for any country to run up a big international indebtedness." No attempt was made to plant Germany firmly on her own feet—quite the reverse : nor was there any thought of what might happen when, as was inevitable, a slump should come.

It came in 1929. This was again nobody's fault and everybody's. It was basically due to nothing else but the inability of finance-capitalism to equate consumption with production, to give the mass of the people enough purchasing power to buy the goods produced.

In a rational world, the financing of German reconstruction would have had nothing whatever to do with considerations of private profit, whether of German, American or British capitalists, nor would it have involved any discrimination as between the interests of, say, Germany and America. The sole motive would have been maximum production equated with maximum consumption, in both cases of all peoples everywhere. But ours was not a rational, but on the contrary an imperialist, world. The stream of American money ceased to flow : capital on short term was immediately called in. This occurred precisely at the moment when, just because there was a slump, what was required was not less support but more. As a result, the disaster in Germany had more catastrophic results than elsewhere. For her growing prosperity had been artificial : it was at the mercy of foreign money, which could be and was withdrawn.

One could fill a book with descriptions of Germany from 1929

* *Op. cit.* p. 51.

to 1933. Here is a moderately worded passage from an article by Hans Vogel, Chairman of the German Social Democrats, from the *Left News* of December 1941 :

" I should like to add a few words on the economic position in July 1932 and the following months. The situation in the labour market was disastrous. The decreasing purchasing power of people of all professions had caused a big slump in consumption goods. The application of ' rationalisation ' (economy in factories) resulted in a sharp decrease in the number of occupied workers. The number of fully unemployed people rose to six millions. Out of all the workers organised in Trade Unions only one-quarter was fully employed at the end of 1931 ; more than one-quarter did part-time work, and nearly 50 per cent. were unemployed. At the same time nominal wages were steadily lowered and the contributions to social insurance rose, while the progressive social reforms, achieved by the workers at times of prosperity and with the aid of their political influence and their Trade Unions, were being abolished. . . .

" Almost all sections of the population were affected by the crisis. The bulk of the petty and medium officials received, in many cases, lower salaries than the workers. One reduction of salary followed another at very short intervals. The small shopkeepers, idle behind empty counters, formed a part of the vast army of unemployed people, and this part was not counted in statistics and was socially neglected. They looked with envy at the salaries of officials and employees, at the wages of the workers, and even at the dole of the unemployed. The small and moderately prosperous peasants rightly complained of the low prices of the goods they produced and the high prices of the articles needed for their life and work. They were overburdened by debts and did not know what to do. In addition, there was a big " professional proletariat "—doctors without patients, lawyers without clients, etc. Many students came from the impoverished middle-class. There were too many intellectuals, who were ill-paid when they finished their studies and began to earn their living. In the streets and the meeting-halls, in newspapers and in Parliament, the National Socialists could be heard crying that the Republic and Democracy, the " System " and " Marxism," " Jewish finance ", and the " big Jewish stores " were solely responsible for this need and misery. And the Capitalists, the big industrialists, bankers, estate owners and those officers who had been dismissed after the last world war and had become something like mercenaries in the meantime, were among those who shouted most fiercely. These debased gentlemen (who included some workers—especially the unemployed ones) did not sing the Internationale, but marched

singing the Horst Wessel song behind flags with crooked crosses. The slogan was not revolution, but counter-revolution.

"This attitude and this mood did not crop up suddenly among the masses; it came to pass slowly and insidiously, but it spread steadily, as a result of the permanent political and economic crisis from which, partly because of the criminal activities of its adversaries, the Republic suffered from the very first day."

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The slump completed what the inflation had begun. When we blame the German people for not putting up a successful fight against Hitler's bid for power, when we blame the Nazi youth for falling a victim to a bestial ideology, let us remember the inflation and the slump as well as the background of German history which was sketched in a previous chapter. And if the reader still wonders whether the present war also is imperialist in ultimate origin, let him ask himself this: in an intelligently planned co-operative world, could either inflation or slump have occurred?

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Enough has perhaps been said to show that, if we are to speak of special and immediate guilt as against general and ultimate guilt, or are to lay special emphasis on conscious and deliberate actions in contradistinction to "the system," then there are charges against "Britain" and "France" as well as against "Germany." But perhaps the immediacy is not sufficiently immediate? After all, 1919 was twenty-three years ago and 1929 thirteen. Very well.

FROM 1933 TO 1939

Hitler was brought to power by the horror of 1929 to 1933. He was a product of the imperialist world, and in it he found his opportunity. The aimless life of the lower middle class in pre-war Austria, 1914, Versailles, the inflation, the slump—these had been the milestones in the life of this pitifully tormented, and tormenting, psychopath. What did we do with him when he arrived? Let us see.

Passages from two speeches made by Mr. Lloyd George in September 1933 and November 1934 have often been quoted; but they will bear endless repetition:

"If the Powers succeed in overthrowing Nazism in Germany what would follow? Not a conservative, socialist or liberal regime, but extreme communism. Surely that could not be their objective . . . The Germans would know how to run their communism effectively. . . He would entreat the Government to proceed cautiously."

And :

" In a very short time, perhaps in a year or two, the conservative elements in this country will be looking to Germany as the bulwark against communism in Europe. . . . Do not let us be in a hurry to condemn Germany. We shall be welcoming Germany as our friend."

The essence of British policy from 1933 onwards can be very briefly expressed. Germany had again become—inevitably, in the conditions of Imperialism—the "explosive force" to which reference was made in Chapter IV. Now you can do two sane things with an explosive force : you can so change your economic system that energy becomes fruitful instead of destructive—you can supersede monopoly capitalism by international socialism : or you can combine with others to prevent the explosion. The first alternative is by far the better, and is the only permanent solution : the second is, as a practical measure in an immediate emergency, comparatively rational. But there is a third possible course. You can say " Let us direct the explosion away from ourselves and on to somebody else—if possible, on to somebody whose way of economic life is a perpetual menace to our own : and let us—to change the metaphor—simultaneously 'cash in' by going into commercial partnership with the aggressor, with a view to strengthening our own hand against other commercial rivals. Indeed, the more we think of all this the more attractive it becomes : let us therefore, for both purposes, strengthen the aggressor."

It is this third course that British policy, directed by heavy-industrialist interests not merely behind the scenes but at the head of the Government, adopted. Interests and Government "built up" Hitler after 1933, diplomatically and commercially, as a "bulwark against Bolshevism" and also to some extent, in continuation of the "balance of power" policy of 1924 to 1929, against France : instead of coming to an agreement with the Soviet Union to restrain him, they directed him against the Soviet Union : and they began to forge a commercial alliance with Germany, inevitably detrimental to the other rival, the United States of America.

Let there be no misunderstanding. I do not believe—I have never believed—that Chamberlain desired to go to war with the Soviet Union : nor was there ever the faintest possibility of this country being willing to do so. Chamberlain quite genuinely detested war and loved peace, as genuinely as Hitler did the opposite : but he also wanted things which were incompatible with peace. He thought " If there's to be war, let's keep out of

it : let somebody else be destroyed : and if it's the Soviet Union, so much the better."

It is unlikely that anyone who followed international events at all closely from 1933 to the spring of 1939 will dispute that the main lines of British policy were as just described. There were, of course, inevitable cross-currents, hesitations, conflicts of interest, and bargainings and bickerings of every description : but the pattern in the carpet—the heart of which was the betrayal of the Spanish Republic—was plain for all to see.

It would be wearisome to rehearse the history of what is called "appeasement." One quotation will illustrate the policy of men who at that time were giving every kind of support to the Hitler of Sachsenhausen and Dachau, but who now call for "retribution" on the whole German people. The following entry is to be found in *Ambassador Dodd's Diary*,* under date May 6th 1935 :

"Lord Lothian wrote me about this in a letter which I received to-day. . . . He indicated clearly that he favours a coalition of the democracies to block any German move in their direction and to turn Germany's course eastwards. That this might lead to a war between Russia and Germany does not seem to disturb him seriously. In fact he seems to feel this would be a good solution of the difficulties imposed on Germany by the Versailles Treaty. The problem of the democracies, as he sees it, is to find for Japan and Germany a stronger place in world affairs to which, in his opinion, they are entitled because of their power and tradition. He hopes this can be accomplished without any sacrifice to the British Empire and with as little destruction to human liberty as possible."

It may be desirable to give three examples of the way in which, during the appeasement period (and apart from all the political and diplomatic acts of appeasement which culminated in Munich) we "built up" the military and industrial strength of Germany, and were entering into partnership with her.

1. *Direct help in rearmament.* Overleaf is reproduced an advertisement inserted by Vickers-Armstrong in a German military journal entitled the *Militär-Wochenblatt*. The headline offers "war equipment of every kind" and under the picture of the howitzer its specifications are given. *The Versailles Treaty forbade the import by Germany of any kind of war equipment or material.* The date of the advertisement is 1932, just before Hitler came to power.

* London, 1940.

KRIEGSAUSRÜSTUNGEN

ALLER ART



105 mm. FELDHAUBITZE VICKERS-ARMSTRONGS

AUF FAHRBARER FEUERPLATTFORM

Gewicht des Geräts	...	...	2197 kg.
in Feuerstellung	...	...	2197 kg.
Anfangsgeschwindigkeit	610-460-220 ms.		
Geschossgewicht	...	...	15 kg.
Grösste Schussweite	...	...	13.200 m.
mit Ueberladung	...	...	13.200 m.

VICKERS-ARMSTRONGS

VICKERS HOUSE, BROADWAY, LONDON, S.W.1, ENGLAND.

On July 4th 1934 the De Havilland Aircraft Company inserted the following advertisement in the *Aeroplane* :

TIGER MOTH
FOR NAVAL AND MILITARY
FLYING TRAINING
supplied to
THE BRITISH ROYAL AIR FORCE
and the Governments of
NORWAY SWEDEN DENMARK
CHINA JAPAN PERSIA POLAND
SPAIN PORTUGAL AND GERMANY*

This was *before* Germany had announced that she had created an air force in contravention of Versailles.

But perhaps these armament firms were acting without the knowledge of the Government? We have the most direct evidence to the contrary. At the annual meeting of Vickers in March 1934 a shareholder put the straight question : was it not a fact that the company was assisting to rearm Hitler-Germany ? Sir Herbert Lawrence, the Chairman, replied " I cannot give you an assurance in definite terms, but I can tell you that nothing is done without the sanction and approval of our own Government."

2. *Indirect help in rearmament.* Almost immediately after Hitler had come to power, Berlin announced that all external debt payments were suspended. The creditors proceeded to Germany, negotiations followed, and in 1934 a Payments Agreement was concluded between Great Britain and the Reich, which, with variations, persisted until the eve of the war. The position was as follows. As a result of the investment policy which, as described, had started with the Dawes plan in 1924, Germany owed Great Britain large sums of money. During the period from 1933 to 1939, Germany was building up an export surplus in her trade with us—she was exporting to us more than she was importing from us. *Broadly, what was happening from 1934 to 1939, as a result of the Payments Agreement, was that in the clearing of the transactions between the two countries Germany paid for her current trade and met the interest charges on what was called the "privileged debt" (the Dawes and Young Loans, etc.), but met only part of the interest charges on other debts, and did not repay capital due for repayment: whereas we paid her in full.* The result was *that*, as she was buying from us less than she was selling to us, she received a constant stream of "free sterling," with which

* Quoted by Noel-Baker, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

she rearmed. In the first year of the Agreement, the Reichsbank got into difficulties, and it looked as if the scheme would break down; whereupon the Bank of England came to the rescue with a loan.

Dr. Einzig* estimates that the proceeds of her exports to Great Britain under the Agreement enabled Germany to purchase raw materials to the value of at least one hundred million pounds; and he further estimates that raw materials constitute on the average at most one-tenth of the value of the armaments in the production of which they are used. On this calculation, the Payments Agreement was instrumental in providing Germany with armaments to the value of one thousand million pounds.

It was provided that the Agreement could be terminated by either party on giving one month's notice. Nevertheless, as Germany committed aggression after aggression and when it was clear to the whole world that she was building up a striking force of unparalleled efficiency, the notice was not given. Why? The minor reason was that the banking interests feared the alternative plan—to set off the balance in Germany's favour against her dishonoured indebtedness—as being less to their immediate profit. If this had been the major or the only reason, it would of itself be almost sufficient to substantiate the main argument of this book. But can it be for a moment doubted that, over and above this, Great Britain was deliberately “building up” Germany—for the reasons already explained?

3. *The Düsseldorf agreement.* Since the beginning of the Hitler regime, German finance capital had been devising, and carrying through, novel plans for the economic enslavement of the world. The method most commonly pursued in South East Europe was typical. Germany purchased vast quantities of goods from those countries: and then, by the process of “freezing”, refused to pay except by selling in return such goods, but such goods only, as it suited her to sell. Everyone knows about the aspirin and mouth-organs with which those countries were flooded. Germany then “dumped” in other countries, at uncommercial prices, a part of the commodities she had bought in South East Europe, so as to close the markets of those other countries to South East Europe, and to make the latter completely dependent on herself.

On the very day after the occupation of Prague (Thursday, March 16th 1939)—when, that is to say, it was clear that Munich had “failed” and that Germany was intent on aggressive war against

* *Op. cit.*, p. 99.

certainly *some* Great Power—the Federation of British Industries, the representative body of British monopoly capitalism, signed a preliminary agreement at Düsseldorf with its opposite number, the Reichsgruppe Industrie, which proposed nothing less than a partnership between these two bodies—and the methods of the German partner have already been described—for the joint exploitation of the world. The agreement was the culminating point in the development of finance capitalism during the period between the two world-wars; and the fact that nevertheless war was to break out within six months between the two partners is the answer to those who imagine that increasing trustification, nationally and internationally, can prevent war so long as monopoly capitalism continues. On the contrary, short of a definitely fascist domination of the whole world, or a decisively large part of it, such increasing trustification must make war both more inevitable and more world wide.*

This was the culminating point, so far, in the development of finance capitalism, because the *biggest* enterprises in two of the most powerful industrial countries aimed at (i) subordinating to themselves the smaller enterprises in those countries, (ii) suppressing the competition of other countries, (iii) dividing between them the markets of the world. This last aim was quite openly expressed: the Berlin correspondent of *The Times*, writing on December 19th 1938 of the forthcoming conversations, said that "it was recognised on the German side that . . . the division of the markets of the world should be given special consideration."†

The representatives at Düsseldorf certainly consulted their London colleagues when they heard of the attack on Czechoslovakia, and were told to go ahead. According to Dr. Einzigt‡ there is every reason to believe that, as seems obvious, a similar instruction was received direct from the British Government. However that may be, on March 28th Mr. Stanley, the President of the Board of Trade, thanked the Federation's representatives, and expressed the opinion that they had performed a valuable piece of work for British industry, although the political developments of the last few days had made further progress impossible: and this latter was indeed the case, for Mr. Chamberlain, having excused the attack on Prague in the House of Commons, was compelled by the public turmoil to change his tone at Birmingham a few days later.

The full text of the Agreement might bore the reader: a few contemporary comments will explain its essence.

* See page 136. † *Times*, December 20th 1938. ‡ *Op. cit.* p. 117.

The News Chronicle had accurately forecast its terms when it wrote that it "provides for the joint pushing of British and German goods in export markets and for the negotiations of arrangements by individual industries for fixing selling prices, and presumably selling quotas, in these markets. Other countries would be invited to participate in such agreements, but in the event of their refusal, British Government help would be sought to restrain them from entering into competition with the British and German industries. The British and German electrical industries, for example, might agree upon a price and quota plan for the particular market, and if, say, the Swiss electrical manufacturers attempted to undercut them, the British Government would be asked to apply some unspecified form of sanctions against Switzerland. What a monstrous suggestion! The sooner this unfortunate agreement is relegated to the pigeon-holes of Whitehall and Tothill Street and forgotten, the better."

I wrote at the time :*

"Apart altogether from the criticism that this agreement is probably directly contrary to the Anglo-American trade agreement, and will lead to difficulties with America, what does it mean? It means that, at the very moment when Germany is revealed as the most shameful aggressor that the world has ever seen, there is to be the beginning of a joint exploitation of the world by British and German capital, one of the results of which would be to give Germany those additional exports which it is vital that she should have if (in the absence of foreign currency and gold reserves) she is to obtain those imports that are vital for her war industries."

The Economist wrote on March 25th 1939 :

"Of condemnation of German methods . . . the agreement is entirely innocent. Indeed, by including as one of the approved objects of trade the provision of a 'volume of foreign currency sufficient for (Germany's) economic needs' it concedes the whole basis of Dr. Schacht's policy. A number of changes in policy hitherto pursued are approved in the agreement. But without exception they are all changes not in *German* but in *British* policies: the creation of international agreements to put an end to our familiar friend 'destructive competition'; a policy of securing complete co-operation not merely in export trade but 'throughout the industrial structure' of the two countries (*i.e.*, complete domestic cartelisation); and, so far from abandoning the subsidisation of German exports, a project for joint Anglo-

* *Is Mr. Chamberlain Saving Peace?* (London, 1939).

German subsidies . . . The lengths to which this collaboration is apparently to go is indicated by the most amazing paragraph of the whole document, which deserves quotation in full :

‘ The two organisations realise that in certain cases the advantages of agreements between the industries of countries or groups of countries may be nullified by competition from the industries in some other country that refuses to become a party to the agreement. In such cases it may be necessary for the organisations to obtain the help of their Governments, and the two organisations agree to collaborate in seeking that help.’

“ The United States is the one country that would be most unlikely to ‘ become a party to the agreement.’ The clause consequently means that in given circumstances the F.B.I. contemplate seeking British Government subsidies to help German trade against American. . . .

“ Its substance is this : Provided Germany does not encroach on British trade preserves or reduce the profit margin of British exporting industries, Great Britain will not concern herself with what Germany does to other people’s trade or by what means. This policy may just conceivably be in the very short-term interests of the firms represented in the F.B.I. It is certainly not in the interests, either at short term or at long, of the British community as a whole. . . . The agreement proposes to compound a commercial felony.”

Six short months before the war, men who now tell us that *the whole German people* is untouchable were entering into partnership with *the most dangerous and reactionary elements among those people*—in fact, with their own opposite numbers : with the heavy industrialists who had brought Hitler to power, who were the very basis of his regime, and whose economic exploitation of the world marched side by side, and was inextricably bound up, with his military offensive. They did this *after* the concentration camps, after the Rhineland, after Austria, after Spain, after Munich, even after Prague : and the Government supported them.

* * * * *

That Hitler deliberately planned the war is certain : that no one wanted war, here, in Russia, or in France, is certain : that Hitlerite Germany must be utterly defeated is the first necessity. But if we are to think, not of the general responsibility in which the international system involves us all, but of more direct and immediate guilt, then others besides Hitler have their share. To differentiate (however real the difference) between the man who

launched war and those who helped to "build him up", and were chiefly anxious that the destruction and the loss should not fall on themselves, seems to me less important than a determination that this war shall issue in a "new order" which will cut out the roots of war; and it is positively dangerous if it diverts any fraction of our attention from this latter task.

* * * * *

The reader will also bear in mind that, in considering the guilt of different elements in Germany, rather than the guilt of "Germany," "Britain," "France," etc., no distinction whatever can be drawn between Hitler and the Nazis (whatever precisely we mean by the latter term) and the big business men and financiers who deliberately backed his movement, for their own purposes and knowing exactly what he contemplated, and thus and thus alone made it possible for him to come to power. If our war aim is to be the punishment of Hitler and the Nazis, then so, and equally, must it be the punishment of the great captains of German industry and finance. Do those among our monopolists who cry for retribution accept this logic? Somehow, I doubt it. They sat side by side with their German confrères in the board-rooms of the giant international trusts: if monopoly capitalism persists, they will be doing so again a very few years after the end of the war. Is Montagu Norman likely to demand that Schacht, so lately his close associate, should be put against a wall and shot? We shall see.

* * * * *

I suggest that two conclusions emerge from this chapter:

(1) Preoccupation with this question of punishment for guilt—of the vanquished by the victors—must divert our attention from the general "guilt" in which we all share, and must therefore prevent us from giving ourselves wholeheartedly to the task of laying the firm foundations of a saner society;

(2) It must also divert our attention from our own special "guilt" and so weaken any resolution we may have for struggling against the forces in our own country which bear so great a responsibility for the events of 1919 to 1939. Those forces would wish for nothing better: shall we play into their hands?

CHAPTER IX GUILT AND PUNISHMENT :

II—ATROCITY-GUILT

But there is another sort of guilt that people think of when they speak of the necessity for punishment. They think of the barbarous atrocities committed in Poland and Russia and elsewhere : and they remember that some men ordered them, as a deliberate and coldly calculated policy, and that others carried them out. Should not this at least be punished ?

I am reluctant to say a single word which could be interpreted as suggesting, even in the most remote and indirect way, an excuse or apology for these atrocities : for, with perhaps half a dozen exceptions, they are as infamous as anything that has ever been committed in the whole long history of human evil. Nor can it be pretended for a second that, as I have heard pacifists suggest, they have not occurred, but are creations of the atrocity-mongering which has been a feature of every past war and will be a feature of every future one. Or it is said that in all wars all belligerents commit atrocities. So, to some degree, perhaps they do : but a degree is a degree, and there is a difference between atrocities committed under the whip of blood-lust and atrocities committed by instruction from above.

Though there has almost certainly been some exaggeration, we know that these atrocities are a fact and not a fiction by the best of all evidence : various statements by the German Government itself, orders of German generals, and so on. The fact is that the German Government has carried totalitarian war to its logical conclusion. Totalitarian war is war not between armies but between populations, of which armies are merely a part : and there is no weapon of terror or oppression which, they think, should not be used, if the use of it will render victory more certain and domination more complete.

Finally, and at the risk of being accused of Vansittartism and patriotic prejudice myself (an accusation which, in point of fact, has already been made), something further must be said. It is inconceivable that at any rate a British Government would have given such orders as the German Government has given : and if it had, Britishers would not have been found, on anything like the German scale, to carry them out, or to seize the opportunity for gratifying a private blood-lust of their own.

This is written without illusions. I have not forgotten what I saw at a British public school not so very many years ago. Money had been missed in one of the houses for some months : and the theft was traced to a boy of seventeen, who had grown

a moustache. Some thirty of his housemates pulled out his moustache hair by hair and then bent him over and beat him in turn. Incidentally, the boy turned out to be innocent. Nor have I forgotten that a British Government deliberately starved the babies of Germany after the last war was over : but I have not forgotten, also, that the occupying soldiers shared their rations with the German people, and that when Plumer was told to forbid this mercy he refused to do so.

The fact is that there is sadism in all of us : the degree to which it is curbed or given full play depends on the environment. Owing to environment, which is the result of a history that has been explained, more Germans than Englishmen unquestioningly obey orders, whatever they may be ; and more Germans than Englishmen are environmentally affected by a militarism which encourages sadistic traits common to humanity, instead of suppressing or sublimating them.*

Germans and Englishmen are here cited merely as examples. What has been said of modern Britain could be said of many other countries. And so with modern Germany : Japan may be mentioned as an almost exact parallel (for it would clearly be imprudent to mention one or two of our allies) and so could a number of other nations. Even environmentally, and genetics apart, the exclusiveness of modern " German " characteristics to modern Germany is a silly myth.

The remedy has already been suggested. For the people, change the environment : for the complex of forces called the German Government, which is what it is and which has got its power for historical reasons, break it up and atomise it utterly.

There is a final word I should like to write about the *fact* of atrocities, before passing on to the main topic of this chapter : or, better, I may quote from the letter of that great Liberal, Dr. Gilbert Murray, O.M., in the *Times* of January 20th 1942. " I know nothing in history," he writes " more hideous than the German treatment of the Jews. Yet, as Rudolf Olden used always to remind us, it took Hitler five years of bribes and threats and lying propaganda to induce the German people to accept pogroms without protest ; and I see traces of the same process being applied to the German armies in Russia. The Reichenau secret order, recently captured and published by the Russian autho-

* If you were in the last war, and received bayonet instruction from a sergeant-major, which I remember as something like this ; " give it him in the chest, and then make a half-turn with the bayonet before removing it : at the same time kick him in the ——" ; and if you noticed how, after half an hour or so, many decent men began to react, you will know what I mean.

rities, is certainly a villainous document, but it betrays in every paragraph the efforts of a brutal high command to force its methods upon an unwilling or half-willing army. It is full of complaints. 'Our troops fail to hunt the enemy in the proper manner. They continue to take cruel and perfidious guerrillas as prisoners.' Villagers, it complains, are actually allowed 'to feed from the German field-kitchens.' 'Such an attitude on the part of our troops can only be described as absolutely frivolous.' 'The supply of food to local inhabitants and prisoners of war is unnecessary humanitarianism.' The picture is clear enough: the soldiers not yet quite willing to commit the cruelties ordered by the Nazi leaders, though of course not venturing to protest or resist. A completely brutalized army would not have needed a Reichenau order."

* * * * *

What dangers are there in intensive propaganda for the punishment, after victory, of those who have ordered or committed war-atrocities? There seem to me to be three: the danger of forgetting that war is the final abomination; the danger of indulging in hatred and vengeance under the cloak of moral righteousness; and the danger of ignoring the difficult question of moral responsibility.

The Abomination of War

The bestiality and wickedness of any war, of war in itself, is so nearly infinite that any concentration on the infinite bestiality and wickedness of the present German conduct of it is to blind ourselves—deliberately, perhaps, in our unconscious—to realities. For what does war mean? It means to inflict torment and starvation and madness and death on our fellow creatures in order to get power over them, or to prevent them from getting power over us. And because twentieth century world wars *are*, whether we like it or not, totalitarian wars, wars of peoples and not of soldiers, it is against the whole enemy people that we have to do our worst. We try to starve the Germans into submission, not visualising, perhaps, exactly what that means. To "destroy morale" the Germans bomb civilian populations far from any military objective: in a second a baby, conceived in joy and born in pain, and reared perhaps for three years, moment by moment, with all the thought and care that love can suggest, becomes a little mess of blood and bones, to be hurriedly swept away before men see it and sicken at the sight. Do we do the same? I do not know whether we do: but the words must be

wrung from me that, if thus alone we could win, we should, God forgive us, be right. And whether we do so or not, that is what, as we saw in Chapter VII, newspaper after newspaper is advocating. I do not blame them for advocating it, if they think, as I deny, that it is a militarily necessary or effective policy, for the defeat of Hitler must now be our supreme consideration: what I blame them for is the hatred and revenge, the joy in another's suffering—"give them a taste of what they gave us"—with which they advocate it. And many do more than urge the bombing of civilians: as perhaps the author of a book of which the *Times Literary Supplement* wrote recently "If [he] had his way, there would be much less difference than now between our methods and the enemy's." "Constant ruthlessness" said Captain Harold Balfour, M.P., at a Constitutional Club luncheon, "was the quality we must develop."*

It must be repeated that what the Germans have done is to push totalitarian war to its logical conclusion. If they think in their folly that they can stop guerrilla fighting in Russia by terrorising the population, and that they must stop it if they are to win, is this so very different from the more "legitimate" methods of modern war? Yes, it is different: several extra drops in an ocean of evil. And mightn't we also, in certain circumstances, have to go some way towards accepting this logic? If nothing but the use of a particularly horrible poison gas could prevent Hitler from conquering the world, shouldn't we have to use it?

Ah, it may be said, but they started the war; and if we had to employ "specially" bestial methods, that would be because they had done so first, or at the very least because we could not prevent the victory of the aggressor without ourselves doing so. The difference is between defence and attack.

It is just because we are thus brought back to stress the immediate "causes" of the war instead of its ultimate origins that any preoccupation with atrocities and their punishment is to be deplored: † as well as because it switches our emotions to horror

* *Times*, January 15th 1942.

† At the signing at St James's Palace on January 13th 1942 of the declaration by nine occupied countries that the avenging of Nazi crimes was henceforth a principal war-aim, General de Gaulle said: "In signing this declaration today we mean, like all the representatives of occupied countries, to declare solemnly that Germany alone is responsible for the outbreak of this war and that she shares with her allies and accomplices responsibility for all the atrocities that proceed from it." It is, moreover, to be noted that while *The Times* in a leading article on the following day stated that "the declaration . . . rejects the hateful doctrine of corporate responsibility," in fact M. Tsouderes, Prime Minister

of the atrocities and away from horror of war itself. Apart altogether from our share of special, direct and immediate guilt as already described, we shall not win the peace unless we keep a series of truths in the very forefront of our minds, and never allow them to be dislodged by any secondary considerations. First, that in a twentieth-century war the aggressor, who would not go to war at all unless he were staking everything on the outcome, will regard nothing as forbidden provided only that it will help him to achieve his purpose: secondly, that twentieth-century aggressive war of a Great Power or bloc of Powers against another Great Power or bloc of Powers stems from the international system of monopoly capitalism, which itself develops out of men's inability to restrain their self-interest and their lust for power and gain: thirdly, that we have all acquiesced in, and contributed to, this system: and fourthly, that the task of tasks is to end it.

We do not escape by the plea that we have not understood these things, or that we have "not been interested in politics," or that we were powerless against our Government. It is precisely for being docile, unpolitical, servile to their Government that we attack the German people. It is our business to be interested in politics, and to control our Government. What else is the meaning of democracy?

It is often suggested that the announcement that "special" atrocities will be punished after the war—I must persist in describing them as "special," for everything that the so-called rules of war permit is an atrocity—will prevent their commission. This is queer psychology. In point of fact, Goebbels' recent line of propaganda on his own military front has been somewhat as follows: you have made yourselves so permanently detested by your crimes that, if you lose this war, you will be annihilated—so do *everything*, however foul, to prevent defeat. It is possible to play into the hands of this propaganda.

II

Hatred and Moral Righteousness.

Except when we are ourselves at war with countries committing them, atrocities do not arouse, on any general scale, a passionate indignation. A small minority does everything in its power to stop them: another small minority may, for its own profit,

of Greece, said that "... the only effective remedy for the evil must be collective also," and Count Raczyński, Foreign Minister of Poland, said that "the final victory of the Allies could find its measure in the reparation of the wrongs inflicted, and the punishment of the offences committed, individually or collectively."

actively facilitate their commission, well aware that they are being committed : the public as a whole is, at worst, quite indifferent, or, at best, passively disapproving. Why this difference in our attitude to atrocities in peace and war ?

The fact itself cannot be questioned. For nearly five years—from the launching of their war in 1937 to the present moment—the Japanese have committed atrocities in China viler even, if that be possible, than those of the Germans in Poland and Russia. They have massacred the defenceless, raped young and old, and tortured their victims : not in any petty or selective fashion, but by the thousands and the tens of thousands. Here are a few examples, vouched for by eye-witnesses of unimpeachable integrity, from Mr. H. J. Timperley's book *What War Means*. Mr. Timperley was at the time China Correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*, and his book was published in 1938 :

" But have to stand by while even the very poor are having their last possession taken from them—their last coin, their last bit of bedding (and it is freezing weather), the poor ricksha man his ricksha ; while thousands of disarmed soldiers who had sought sanctuary with you together with many hundreds of innocent civilians are taken out before your eyes to be shot or used for bayonet practice and you have to listen to the sound of the guns that are killing them ; while a thousand women kneel before you crying hysterically, begging you to save them from the beasts who are preying on them . . . this is a hell I had never before envisaged."

" Robbery, murder, rape continue unabated. A rough estimate would be at least a thousand women raped last night and during the day. One poor woman was raped thirty-seven times. Another had her five months' infant deliberately smothered by the brute to stop its crying while he raped her. Resistance means the bayonet. The hospital is rapidly filling up with the victims of Japanese cruelty and barbarity."

" Wilson reported a boy of five years of age brought to the hospital after having been stabbed with a bayonet five times, once through his abdomen ; a man with eighteen bayonet wounds, a woman with seventeen cuts on her face and several on her legs."

" Went with Sperling to see fifty corpses in some ponds a quarter of a mile east of headquarters. All obviously civilians, hands bound behind backs, one with the top half of his head cut completely off. Were they used for sabre practice ? "

" At noon a man was led to headquarters with head burned cinder black—eyes and ears gone, nose partly, a ghastly sight.

I took him to the hospital in my car where he died a few hours later. His story was that he was one of a gang of some hundred who had been tied together, then gasoline thrown over them and set afire. He happened to be on the outer edge so got the gas only over his head."

"A few of to-day's: A boy of 13, taken by the Japanese nearly two weeks ago, beaten with an iron rod and then bayoneted because he didn't do his work satisfactorily. A car with an officer and two soldiers came to the University last night, raped three women on the premises and took away one with them. The Bible Teachers' Training School was entered many times; people were robbed and twenty women raped."

"The men in the immediate vicinity of my informant (he did not speak of others) were bound with wire, wrist to wrist, in pairs. . . . At day-break he went a little in that direction and saw bodies in rows, bayoneted."

"Burial gangs report 3,000 bodies at the point, left in rows or piles after mass executions."

"Evidences from burials indicate that close to 40,000 unarmed persons were killed within and near the walls of Nanking, of whom some 30 per cent. had never been soldiers."

"You can scarcely imagine the anguish and terror. Girls as low as 11 and women as old as 53 have been raped on University property alone. In other groups of refugees are women of 72 and 76 years of age who were raped mercilessly. On the Seminary Compound 17 soldiers raped one woman successively in broad daylight. In fact, about one-third of the cases are in the daytime."

"It was the night of the big air raid. And only God and the people left in the doomed city of Soochow know, or ever will know, the horrors of that night. The most dreadful nightmare could not compare with it. The entire city and its environs were lighted with flares dropped from planes. And then death started on its speedy flight from the skies. No human being could have counted the number of bombs released upon this defenceless city. One might as well have tried to count the drops of rain falling on a like number of square miles in 12 hours' time. . . . At daybreak, we arose and went into the city. The death and destruction we witnessed defies all description. We felt nauseated, sick. The only cheering sight we saw was a Chinese pastor leading a thousand refugees towards Kwangfu. What a picture! Behind him trailed small children, old men and women, the lame and those disabled by bombs and shells—I thought of the Good

Shepherd leading His flock. In two days, 5,000 refugees from Soochow had been removed to Kwangfu."

"In some places the corpses were as thick as flies on fly-paper, with limbs and mutilated bodies piled in the utmost confusion. Hundreds of weeping women were scrambling in the ruins for the remains of relatives while thousands more roamed the street terror-stricken and bewildered, their minds partially deranged by the horrors of yesterday and today . . . A grim-faced Chinese gentleman raised a piece of matting and displayed to Reuter's correspondent a mass of mangled remnants, saying simply: 'This was my wife.'"

"More taken as ex-soldiers. Women and old men come kneeling and crying, begging our help in getting back their husbands and sons."*

"Begging our help." Now listen, please.

Of the total of all goods imported by Japan, about 32 per cent. in 1937, and about 50 per cent. in 1938 and 1939, were war

* Because I do not wish to stir up hatred of the Japanese people by quoting these passages, as my purpose requires, I quote also the following:

"I haven't the least wish to condemn a whole people with any such words as I have here tapped out. Nor even would I, by any means, condemn all who are in the army. I could list for you a goodly number of instances of fine sympathy and human goodness on the part of individual soldiers and officers, that have come within the range of our knowledge or observation right here. And more than one have told me that they would prefer not to be at this, but 'we are under orders.' There you have it. They are caught in the meshes of a system, and carried along hardly half aware of what it is all about and where it is taking them. God, pity these men! and pity this old world that still does not cure itself of the terrible malady of the war system! Are we Christians so helpless as we have seemed to be hitherto to bring some remedy for war madness? How much are we actually undertaking to do?"

"These words are intended particularly for some of my closer friends and relatives. I trust that they will not fan the flames of hatred on the part of any of you, but that they will equip you a bit for further thinking, and for giving testimony where ungrounded propaganda is spreading falsehood. . . ."

It is also a pleasure to record the following. When the Japanese troops were approaching Nanking, where many of these horrors occurred, and all officials, Chinese and foreign, who could find any means of transport were fleeing "in their hundreds of thousands," a score of foreigners stayed behind, against the advice of their officials and in spite of the desperate danger, to give what succour they could to the helpless. "Veritable heroes" is how Mr. Timperley describes them: he speaks movingly of "their courage, their selflessness, their devotion." The Chairman and leader of this little band was Herr John H. D. Rabe, not only a German but a Nazi. He used his Nazi decoration to extort occasional "concessions" from the Japanese for Chinese women and babies.

materials. In 1939—figures for the other years are approximately the same—of this 50 per cent., 56·85 per cent. was contributed by the United States (including 1·18 per cent. from the Philippines) and 22·12 per cent. by the British Empire—making just on 79 per cent. together. Incidentally, it is the war machine thus geared, and the reserves thus provided by the English-speaking peoples, that Japan is now using against them.

For the following war materials Japan is completely or almost completely dependent on foreign sources: lead, nickel, tin, petroleum, and rubber. Of her imports in 1939 of lead, she received 66·2 per cent. from the British Empire and 33·83 per cent. from the United States; of nickel, 94·8 per cent. from the British Empire; of tin, 89·8 per cent. from the British Empire; of petroleum, 66·16 per cent. from the United States and 7·6 per cent. from the British Empire; and of rubber, 31·5 per cent. from the British Empire and 4·89 per cent. from the United States.

Of the following war materials Japan produces quantities inadequate to meet domestic demand: aluminium, copper, zinc, asbestos, mica, and iron and steel scrap. Of her imports in 1939 of aluminium, she received 70·9 per cent. from the British Empire and 7·29 per cent. from the United States; of copper, 92·19 per cent. from the United States and 7·5 per cent. from the British Empire; of zinc, 48·2 per cent. from the British Empire and 5·37 per cent. from the United States; of asbestos, 100 per cent. from the British Empire; of mica, 100 per cent. from the British Empire; and of iron and steel scrap, 91·01 per cent. from the United States and 6·2 per cent. from the British Empire.

The United States was the chief source of all the four major classes of war materials shipped to Japan, namely petroleum and products, iron materials, metal-working machinery, and copper. Of the total of metal-working machinery imported by Japan in 1939, the United States contributed 70·19 per cent. She was also the most important supplier of automobiles, parts and accessories, internal combustion engines, aircraft and parts, and miscellaneous metals and alloys. These various items accounted in 1939 for over 98 per cent. of her total shipments of war materials to Japan; and the value of the total, on which her magnates drew their profits, came in that one year to over 162 million dollars.

In the case of iron and steel scrap Japan was virtually dependent on the United States, there being no other source of supply available; and a third of the entire production of the Japanese

steel industry—the backbone of armament and munition manufacture—was based on American scrap. As to oil, it was estimated that over 90 per cent. of Japan's current demands had to be met from abroad; and of her total oil imports the United States supplied two-thirds.*

The Times summed up the matter in this very moderate language a little time back :

“ It has been stated that nine-tenths of the material which Japan has used in her war of aggression against China has been drawn from American and British sources. That may be an exaggeration, but it is safe to say that the proportion is such that she would not have been able to carry on if these supplies had been denied her. . . ”

It was thus great American and British business concerns that alone made it possible for Japan to commit atrocities which they knew, better than any, she was committing; and the American and British Governments, which by a few strokes of the pen could have prohibited the traffic, preferred to be Japan's accomplice. Why? The motives were various. Profits from the immediate sale: commercial rivalry between ourselves and the United States: the hope, at first, that we could save our own “ interests ” in China by keeping in with the Japanese, or by diverting them from the areas with which we were specially concerned. Also the fear that, if we were to provoke Japan by cutting off supplies, she might turn on us and torture us instead. And, again, the thought that Japan was a bulwark against Soviet or Chinese Communism.

But each one of these motives merely makes the fact more inexcusable. When, therefore, these magnates and their press cry for the punishment of Japanese atrocities, now that they are being committed by our *enemy* and against ourselves or our allies, is it outraged morality, or something else, that prompts them? And when Mr. Cordell Hull, who was a leading member of the United States Administration during the whole period in question, says after the Japanese air-raid on Manila :

“ Japan had taken to the Philippines the practice of fiendishness which she had long practised in China; she had, he said, an entirely consistent record in recent years in the practice of

* All the above facts and statistics are extracted from the very careful and elaborate report issued by The Chinese Council for Economic Research, Washington, D.C. (August, 1940), entitled *World Exports to Japan Essential for War Purposes, 1937-39*.

the same methods of cruelty and barbarity as Adolf Hitler has been practising in Europe "*.

—can he sound very impressive to those whose memory goes back beyond yesterday? Or can, for the matter of that, our in many ways very great Prime Minister, when he says: "We can only feel that Hitler's madness has infected the Japanese mind and that the root and branch of this evil must be extirpated together"?† Or when he says in the House of Commons: "So precarious and narrow was the margin upon which we then lived that we did not dare to express the sympathy which we have *all along* [my italics] felt for the heroic people of China (cheers)."† If Mr. Churchill was referring to the closing of the Burma Road against China during the present war, then he could perhaps justly plead "our narrow and precarious margin": but if, as the words "all along" appear to indicate, his mind was going back to the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese conflict in 1937, then it must be said that, when allowance has been made for every possible difficulty, to place a weapon in the hands of the aggressor is a curious result of sympathy.

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As for the general public, while these atrocities against the Chinese were proceeding it was difficult to arouse more than a flicker of interest, for the Chinese, as Mr. Chamberlain said of the Czechs, "lived very far away" and were people "of whom we knew very little." Some fair sums were raised for relief: a small band of devoted workers did what they could for China: but there the matter ended. I do not remember any widespread and passionate demand for punishing the perpetrators of these atrocities or, what would have been the equivalent, for helping China to punish them by giving her diplomatic and military aid. It is said that this apathy was excusable, because people in general did not know what was happening. Well, at first the newspapers were full of the horror; and if they rapidly dropped it, this must have been because the editors knew that the public was getting bored.

The attitude is different now. "All America," says the *Daily Express* of December 28th 1941, "was savagely angry last night at the news of the attack on Manila. Everywhere the cry went up 'We will have our revenge.' . . . And the feeling everywhere was that by that one act Japanese airmen had sown the seeds of a terrible harvest of agony, destruction and death for the crowded cities of their own country."

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* *Times*, Dec. 29th 1941.

† *Times*, Dec. 29th 1941.

Let us take another case, in which public ignorance cannot possibly be pleaded. From 1933 to 1939 the Nazis were doing at Sachsenhausen and Dachau and Oranienburg and the rest—to pacifists and liberals and socialists and communists and Jews—exactly what they have been doing since in the Polish reserves. These abominations were the background of European history. All the world knew about them: on and off even barely printable examples appeared in the Press, for they were good “copy.” Yet among the majority of the general public there was at best a little sporadic and rather careless indignation: it was not strong enough to bring the Popular Front to power, nor did it prevent a surge of selfish relief when, at Munich, another victim was sacrificed and we were saved. The minority which, before 1939, did all in its power to awaken the conscience of the nation, overlaps very little with those who today are putting in the very forefront of their demands the punishment of war atrocities. As for the Government, having carefully collected, month by month and year by year, a record of Hitler’s most horrifying atrocities against the Jews, it duly published them as a “best-selling” Blue Book—but only when the appeasement which had synchronised with their commission was over, only after the declaration of war.

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The Sunday Times is typical of the contrast between then and now. It is the chief organ of Vansittartism: many of its leading articles, indeed, do not merely reproduce Vansittart’s opinions, but even flatter him to the extent of imitating, with remarkable fidelity, his style. It calls for “retribution,” not merely on Hitler or the Nazis or the Prussian Junkers (does it specifically mention the Nazi newspaper magnates? I cannot remember), but on the whole German people. Yet from 1933 to 1939, when Nazi atrocities were the backcloth of the European stage, it spoke with a different voice. Its consistent note was hostility to the Soviet Union. Concessions for Nazi Germany were urged all through those years without exception, often at the expense of France: when Hitler aggressed, attention was called to his protestations of peaceful intent, which were taken at their face value: and while anti-semitism was deplored, stress was laid on doing nothing which might have the effect of spoiling relations with Germany. Only one motive, it was constantly insisted, must guide us: “British interests.”

Here are a very few quotations. Two are from articles by Lord Kemsley himself and the gossip-writer “Atticus”: all the rest are either from leaders or from feature contributions of the

"star" editorial writer who at that time was using the pseudonym "Scrutator."

"Let those who deplore the methods employed by the present regime ask themselves whether Germany and Europe are likely to be better off under the alternative [communism]."—*February 26th 1933.*

"The Prussian Junker has a philosophy which is not ours but nevertheless commands respect. . . . We are wrong in singling out militarism and a policy of warlike adventure as the distinguishing characteristics of the Prussian. . . . The Prussian . . . has after all something to contribute to Germany that Germany cannot do without."—*March 5th 1933.*

"It is far from our intention to suggest that the wrongs done to Jewry by the German Government's policy should be condoned or go unredressed. . . . What we are concerned to say [however] is that, difficult as it must be, the moderation of Herr Bruno Walter [*i.e.*, his plea for tolerance] is right."—*April 30th 1933.*

"Herr Hitler is an honest—a very honest—man."—*June 25th 1933.*

"[The nation-wide traffic hold-up and general search] served a useful purpose in demonstrating to the German people how strong and efficient their rulers are and of reminding them of the menace of communism in their midst."—*July 30th 1933.*

(Incidentally, this terror of communism in Germany seems somewhat inconsistent with the suggestion that a German revolution is, because of the very nature of the German people, impossible.)

"This country is prepared to carry out its obligations under the Treaty of Locarno. But our Western interests on the Continent end at the Rhine; our Eastern interests begin in the freedom of the Dardanelles for the passage of the British Navy. Between there is nothing worth the bones of a single British Guardsman."—*July 8th 1934.*

"We are not committed nor must we commit ourselves to any physical efforts on her [Austria's] behalf, except those of the writers of leading articles and despatches. Nor are we called upon to distribute moral censures, or even to inquire too narrowly into ulterior motives. Our duty is to use the respite from danger wisely, and with first thoughts for the security of our own people."—*July 29th 1934.*

"We are, of all great Powers, the most sympathetic with Germany, certainly not because we like her politics . . . but because we cannot expel from our minds the sense of family

relationship, and because almost alone among nations we understand the realistic virtue of forgetting and forgiving. We are therefore, the ideal mediator."—*March 24th 1935.*

"With the faith and hope of the new Germany this country sympathises, little as it may like the forms that they have taken. . . ."—*May 19th 1935.*

[Of the Rhineland Occupation] "But an injury to the Treaty is not necessarily an injury to France, still less an aggression on the soil of France. . . ."—*March 8th 1936.*

"There is no doubt in Germany a genuine and deep-seated fear of Russia, now so powerfully armed; that feeling must be allowed for in any estimate of the motive and aim of Herr Hitler's policy."—*March 8th 1936.*

"There is no friendship possible except on the basis of equality . . . also in our moral estimates of each other."—*March 15th 1936.*

"The door which the Locarno Powers have opened to Germany will not be slammed back in their faces."—*March 22nd 1936.*

"The main objection here to the Franco-Russian Treaty is that it might involve France in a war with Germany in Eastern Europe in which this country was not interested. Here is the core of the trouble . . . How far are we committed by Locarno to sacrifice British lives in what are not genuine British interests? . . . That . . . gap against war in defence of other than British interests must be narrowed down, and, for choice, blocked altogether. Perhaps Mr. Chamberlain will help."—*March 29th 1936.*

"Herr Hitler in particular deserves congratulations on this agreement with Austria, and we are not disposed to look behind and around to find hidden and sinister motives."—*July 12th 1936.*

[The City is right in interpreting Ribbentrop's appointment as "a good thing."] "He has won the liking and respect of everyone who has met him and, better still, he has won the liking of the great public."—*August 16th 1936.*

"If we want to help the victims of oppression abroad—the Jews in Germany for example—the right course for us is to offer them asylum in Palestine or elsewhere, not to quarrel with Germany or to let a false sense of moral superiority obstruct the pursuit of plain British interests."—*August 8th 1937.*

[Comparison with Russia: there Generals were shot but] "in Germany such affairs are handled more decently."—*February 6th 1938.*

"He [Hitler] is not arrogant . . ."—*February 13th 1938.*

"No rational man proposes that this country should go to war to save Austria . . . War might well bring Russian influence further east [sic: no doubt misprint for west] . . . Until Central Europe came within the boundaries of the Mediterranean, no boundary would be worth the bones of a single British soldier."—*February 20th 1938.*

"Would that it were possible to let the sins on both sides cancel each other out and for us to begin all over afresh!"—*March 13th 1938.*

[Lord Runciman goes to Prague] "as arbitrator not mediator . . . Why, when he [Hitler] protests his desire for a peaceful settlement, should he not be taken at his word?"—*July 31st 1938.*

"Surely the most significant fact in the Munich Treaty is that it completely ignores Russia; but what chance is there of the Treaty fructifying as we all hope if France is still bound to the Soviet Government which Germany is determined to exclude from any say in the future of what was once the Austro-Hungarian Empire?"—*October 2nd 1938.*

"In fairness to ourselves as well as to the Germans, it is only right to think of Herr Hitler's foreign policy as a whole and not in selected parts . . . Hitler . . . regards Russia as the enemy, not France, and looks for expansion of Germany to the East and South, not to the West . . . The central ideal of Hitler's foreign policy is to gain freedom for Germany to expand in Eastern Europe by abandoning the idea of war in the West . . . [Germany does not want to dominate non-German races.] There ought to be, therefore, no inconsistency between the Nazi philosophy of politics and the hopes of European appeasement which Herr Hitler expresses in his New Year's message . . ."—*January 1st 1939.*

[After the invasion of Czechoslovakia] " . . . To deny all sincerity to Hitler and to represent him as the ruthless enemy of the causes that he professes to believe in is a natural and easy, but not perhaps entirely just, judgment."—*March 19th 1939.*

" . . . We who have supported the policy of appeasement have had no quarrel with either Germany or Italy because her political system differs from our own." [Written by Lord Kemsley, the proprietor.]—*March 26th 1939.*

But it is not only ex-appeasers who are the victims of this particular form of myopia: it clouds the vision even of a man as decent and humane as Mr. Eden. "The trouble with Hitler, for instance," he said in his broadcast on January 5th 1942, "was not that he was a Nazi at home. The trouble with him was that he would not stay at home." Then has not a German nerves or a Jew dignity? Cannot they too feel the pain of the whip? Are not the German communist and the Russian peasant equal sufferers? Which is more real, their humanity or their national label? Yet Mr. Eden was so little able to see what his critics were driving at that four days later, in the House of Commons, he said that "he had to stand in a white sheet about one sentence in which he did not express himself very well in his recent broadcast" and added that there was "in that sentence an over-simplification. He fully realised that it could be taken to mean that the Nazi is the kind of animal who might in some circumstances stay at home. He was not, and that was the fundamental trouble not only with the Nazis but with the Germans. It was part of their creed that they would not stay at home. The essence of the creed and the essence of German practice for the last 100 years was that they were aggressive animals."

All that Mr. Eden did by his apology was to confirm his complete absence of "trouble" about how Hitler might treat human beings who happened to be German, and to add a touch of Vansittartism, from which one had believed him immune. In fact, he normally is immune; for he had spoken movingly of German soldiers on the Russian front as "half-a-dozen more of Hitler's unhappy victims"—a description from which, no doubt, Lord Vansittart would dissent.

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What conclusion must we draw from this comparison between then and now, between our reaction to atrocities committed against others by a country with which we are at peace, and committed against ourselves or our allies by a country with which we are at war? Surely that what chiefly moves many of us is not the commission of the atrocities, by which we could not be moved too much, *but the fact that it is our enemy, the enemy with whom we are engaged in a struggle for life or death, who is committing them.* In other words, self-regarding hatred of the criminal, rather than other-regarding hatred of the crime, is, for the most part, the reality; and we have already tried to show how dangerous, in this war of all wars, such hatred is.

III—*Moral Responsibility*

The question of moral responsibility must be very briefly touched upon. Take the case of a German boy now eighteen years of age, who was five in 1929, when the slump was beginning and the Nazi party got its first great opportunity. If his parents were caught up into the movement: if he was surrounded by an atmosphere of violence, and taught, directly and by example, that duty and honour meant, for a German, the extreme of vengeance on Germany's enemies: if, later on, when Hitler came to power, he saw this doctrine consecrated as the State religion: then can he be held responsible when, with thirteen years of such teaching behind him, he takes the boots from a Russian prisoner and lets him freeze to death? I cannot think so: he, no less than his victim, is worthy only of our pity and our help.

It seems probable that all human conduct is determined by inheritance, tradition, and environment, and that free will does not in fact exist. But a *belief* in free will exists: and this belief is itself one of the most important factors in conditioning conduct. The more there is a general belief in free will, and the more we believe in it ourselves, the easier it is for us to choose the better and reject the worse: in other words, a belief in free will itself conditions us to accept the moral code of our civilisation. A wise man, therefore, will hold himself responsible, but will say of his neighbour "he knows not what he does"—and will set about so contriving that neither his neighbour nor anyone else will wish to do likewise in the future.

This question of moral responsibility is not of remote or academic interest but of crucial practical importance: for if, in our preoccupation with punishing people for what they have done, we forget that it is circumstances and environment which have chiefly made them do it, then we shall apply ourselves less wholeheartedly to the overwhelmingly important work of changing the circumstances and the environment.

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We can sum up as follows the dangers of this steadily swelling propaganda for the punishment, by the victors, of the war-guilt and atrocity-guilt of the vanquished. It increases hate: it obscures the general responsibility, as well as our own special responsibility, for the war: it diverts attention from the utter bestiality, atrocities or no atrocities, of war in itself: and it makes us forget that man is largely made by circumstances. Under all these heads it involves a sterile concentration on the past and the present, whereas the one thing needed is a determina-

tion to build a better future, in which new circumstances will help to make, and not in Germany alone, new men and a new life.

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If we are to think positively, and not negatively, of the future rather than of the past, we come back, in this matter of punishment also, to our former conclusion. First we must utterly defeat the Hitler war-machine, for that is the indispensable condition for what is to follow. *This achieved, we must help the German people, WHO ALONE CAN DO IT, themselves to destroy the power of their own "guilty"—their industrialists and militarists and Junkers and Gestapo—so completely that it can never revive.* That is the only punishment that has any realistic meaning: and incidentally it is a punishment which those of the "guilty" who cannot bring themselves to become useful members of the new society will regard as worse than death. It is punishment in the healthy, preventive sense: and not only does it prevent the same people from committing similar acts again, which of course you can always do by simply shooting them, but, what is far more important, it prevents anybody in the future *from ever being in a position* to commit them. For a German revolutionary government to expropriate the heavy industrialists (among other things) is to achieve the substance: for the Allies to punish particular individuals—and how conceivably can you decide just who they are to be or where to stop?—is to fool oneself with the shadow. And a very dangerous shadow. For victors intent on such punishment, and therefore less concerned with underlying realities, are precisely victors who, respecting "the rights of property" and "the honourable elements in the old officer class," will, when it comes to it, sidetrack the real German revolution, and so prepare the way for the re-emergence, in new forms, of the old trouble.

Provided always that they do not concentrate on individuals rather than on whole groups or classes, and provided also that they destroy the foundations of power rather than its mere manifestations—and "punishment" by the Allies would inevitably transgress both these provisos—I for one am indifferent whether or not the free Germans set up, as merely incidental to the process of expropriation, revolutionary courts for the trial of individuals. I do not greatly care whether they "try" Dr. Schacht: the important thing is that the Reichsbank should belong to the people, and that no one remotely of Dr. Schacht's mind and traditions, or for that matter of Mr. Montagu Norman's, should ever again be in control of it. Certainly some, and perhaps

many, individuals will have to be deprived of civic rights, or imprisoned, or shot : not from motives of vengeance or " retribution " or as a warning to others—though punishment for this last motive, *when inflicted on its own nationals by a people in revolution*, may be a necessary weapon, if often detestably unjust, for the consolidation of revolutionary power—but because some would almost inevitably abuse their liberty, and others may have become so depraved that regeneration is impossible. But only one thing really matters : that the German people should cut out the *roots* of finance-capitalism, of its ally militarism, and of the Nazism which arose from the marriage of both these with idealism, with depravity, and with despair. This is the work they have to do ; and I for one hope that they will do it effectively, finally, and as mercifully as possible.

CHAPTER X.—WHAT CAN BE DONE

Two difficulties may and indeed should have been insinuating themselves, for some time, into the reader's mind. " You have been talking about the supersession of monopoly capitalism by international socialism : and you have argued that unless this happens, another great world war, and then another, is all but inevitable. Presumably you mean the ending of capitalism, and the establishment of socialism, throughout the world. But let us be practical. Is socialism conceivable, in our lifetime, in the United States : is it even conceivable in Great Britain ? I mean socialism in the sense in which you mean it : not something socialistic, not measures of reform or control, but something built up on the basis of public ownership of the land and the means of production—the British or American or Chinese equivalent of what the Russian people has been trying to do, and in many respects has so remarkably succeeded in doing, since 1917, and differing from that only in so far as we start from a different point and with different geography and resources and against a different background of history and tradition. Surely neither British nor American socialism is conceivable in that sense, in our lifetime ? But if not, why waste words ? Even if everything **you** say is true what's the good of saying it if things just aren't going to happen that way ? And there is another difficulty. In an earlier chapter you talked about the necessity for a move to the left in Britain during the war, and said that what happened in Europe at the end of it might well depend on such a move. I don't quite know what you mean by a move to the left, but if you

mean any sort of socialism you're talking rot and know it. It just isn't happening. But if capitalist interests are in control here as the war nears its end and as the fighting stops, won't they do with Europe, as far as they can, what it suits *them* to do? There'll be the Soviet Union, of course: - but it's impossible to foresee just how she will move. And probably the United States will have more to say in the matter than Great Britain, for she is bound to come out far stronger than we, and we shall be financially dependent on her. Will capitalist interests have ceased to control *her*? Not likely! So the whole thing goes up in smoke. Your scheme's no good unless the whole world, and not merely Germany and Europe, goes socialist, which it won't; and as for Germany, British and American capitalists will see to it that she doesn't go socialist either if they can possibly prevent it. There will be nothing that we can do."

These objections arise from the habit of looking at things in too clear-cut and formal a manner, instead of regarding history as a process which is constantly in a state of flux, we being part of the flux and in a state of flux ourselves. But before taking the two points in order, let us be clear about one thing. Even if it were a fact that nothing but universal socialism would help, or at any rate socialism over a total area predominant in population and power and resources: and that such a development seemed inconceivable in our lifetime or indeed at all; this would still not absolve us from the necessity of stating the truth as we see it, and of persuading others to do the same. Beethoven's *Hammerklavier* Sonata only comes to life when you play it: before that it is ink and paper. A truth only comes to life when you speak it. And as for inconceivability, everything new is a miracle before it happens. If the man in the street had been told, in 1913, that within four years the most famous autocracy in the world would have gone socialist, he would have thought you mad: in 1921 most people were sure that the eventual re-establishment of capitalism in Russia was quite inevitable: and what real expert gave the Soviet Union more than six weeks in 1939? The only safe thing, as well as, incidentally, the only possible one, is to say what you think, whether it all seems hopeless or not. As with socialism in general, so with Germany: if it seemed one hundred per cent. certain that Vansittartism would win, we should still be skunks if we didn't give it a run for its money.

But in any case the two objections are invalid. First, the establishment of socialism in Europe and particularly in Germany would be of crucial importance for the advance to universal peace, even if there were no simultaneous changes in Great Britain, the United States, or anywhere else in the world; and

secondly, it is not true that, if capitalism survives the war here and in America, the German and European revolution will inevitably be sabotaged, and that ordinary people will be unable to save it. Let us consider these two points in turn.

I

The establishment of a self-governing socialist Europe, with Germany as one of its most important constituents, would have one invaluable result, over and above its immediate and ultimate advantages to the European peoples and even if there were no simultaneous changes in other parts of the world. *It would remove this great and vital territory, the home, with Great Britain, of western civilisation, from the area of twentieth century Imperialism.*

The importance of such a result cannot possibly be exaggerated. Socialism is already established over a sixth of the earth's surface.* The Soviet Union had to build from the rocks. Illiterate, overwhelmingly peasant in population, degradingly poor, untouched by western culture save for a handful of effete aristocrats and Parisianised intelligentsia: with corrupt bureaucrats, a tyrannous autocracy, a debased Church, and an army as brave as it was miserably equipped and vilely treated: with, for modern industry, nothing but a sporadic, haphazard, and mushroom growth: this land of the knout, this happy hunting ground of foreign bankers, has become, in a quarter of a century, the second industrial country of the world, literate, self-reliant, with its own civilisation, and with an army so overwhelmingly strong and so magnificently led and equipped that in it Hitler at last, for all his six years' preparation, has found his match and, we may hope, his doom. The transformation is a miracle.

And now we are imagining that in a great and contiguous area, with populations that gave us the Renaissance and the Enlightenment and the three great watchwords of 1789 which Hitler, if he could, would erase from all our memories: with accumulated stores of varied experience in manifold branches of human endeavour: with a deep-seated understanding, over wide sub-

* When I use the word "socialism" in this context, I mean that the economic foundations of socialism have been laid, that private ownership of the means of production has been abolished. In any country in which that has happened, Imperialism, in the sense used in this book—the rivalry of that country's finance capitalism with the finance capitalism of other countries—has become impossible, because its finance capitalism has ceased to exist: and aggression of any kind has become, though not impossible, far less probable than before. But, as I explain in my little book *Russia and Ourselves*, I do not regard the Soviet Union as more than potentially socialist in the full sense, for socialism seeks the maximum of personal freedom and democratic self-government.

divisions, of the most modern developments in agriculture and industry: with the gaiety of the Italians and the dutifulness of the Germans and (best of all for me, and I speak only of those I know) the gravity, the courteous and kindly scepticism, the settled and ultimately unshakeable Europeanism of the French, waiting, all of them, to contribute their best to the common stock of a civilisation no longer shackled either by Hitler or by the sectional greeds from which he came—we are imagining that in this great area a federal socialism will be established, freely linked, as is inevitable, with the older federal socialism adjoining it, learning from the U.S.S.R. the invaluable lessons which, to those who are starting from their own 1917, she alone can teach, but making available, also, the fruits of her more Western and European experience to her great Eastern associate, and finding, now that the barriers of fear and suspicion are down, that her open door is welcomed.

I would add another word about the Soviet Union. Socialists who criticise her, in some important and indeed fundamental particulars, are misinterpreted both on the left and on the right. If we cannot agree that she enjoys, for instance, liberty of speech discussion and the Press, and if, doubly as socialists, we feel it necessary to insist on the value of these freedoms; then the left is quick to cry "antisoviet" and "enemy." The right makes a mistake as great and as offensive: for it impertinently imagines that we are preferring its greedy, inefficient, and morally contemptible capitalism to Soviet socialism, whereas we are really preferring the liberties and clemencies we have won by centuries of struggle to the absence of them which, perhaps necessarily, has characterised the establishment of socialism, as yet no more than twenty-five years old, in Russian conditions. And if we speak our minds, it is because the fascist threat to civilisation, with its lies and its propaganda and its blasphemous hatred of objectivity, makes any suppression of the truth or suggestion of the false of which we might be guilty a betrayal of ultimate standards which are everywhere in peril.

Criticise as we may and if need be shall, we are grateful beyond any possibility of expression to the Soviet Union for two things. We are grateful to her, as are our friends of the right, because she is fighting the world's battle with such magnificent efficiency and indomitable determination: just as we are grateful to the young airmen of Britain who on their day also saved the world, and to our men at sea who are still saving it, and even, so to say, to ourselves—to every man, woman and child in this island who endured when, quite alone, they seemed to face the end. But we are also grateful to the Soviet Union for another thing: and here

we part company with the right. We are grateful to her for having founded, maintained, and built her socialism into the mighty thing it is : for having established and kept safe a socialist base : and for having ready a great area, withdrawn from Imperialism, with which another area may now march side by side. We may not be " Friends of the Soviet Union " : but we are her friends, not only because she is resisting Hitler but also and above all because she is socialist.

Our gratitude and friendship, however, do not imply that we would wish European socialism to be without those values which so far, for whatever historical reason and perhaps, given Russian conditions, for whatever revolutionary necessities, have not found a sure place in the Soviet Union. On the contrary we passionately desire that, if so it may happen, European socialism shall embody from its early days the tradition, perfectly realised nowhere and in some countries hardly at all but still a tradition, of democracy and personal freedom, as reinterpreted under the necessities of that modern large-scale organisation which the twentieth century has rendered inevitable. An initial element of revolutionary dictatorship there will almost certainly have to be in Europe also : but very much will depend on whether it will be striving, even from the beginning, to " wither away."

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A socialist bloc, stretching from Vladivostok to Brest, would totally transform the world situation. Withdrawn from the rivalries of the imperialist world : intent on its own development and on increasing the prosperity of its peoples : trading as units, the European federation with the Soviet federation and both with the imperialist Powers : colossal in resources and so strong for self-defence as all but to rule out the possibility of being attacked ; this area would be like a giant rock, and round its base would surge the choppy cross-currents of the imperialist sea. Great wars might and probably would still break out : but a really substantial portion of the globe would be immune from them, and each one of them might be followed by the adhesion of vast new areas—think only of India and China—to what might rapidly become the socialist half of the world. But there is another possibility. Such a bloc would be both a magnet and an inspiration for the popular and progressive forces everywhere. Its very existence might mean such an increase of socialist influence that socialism might spread from the centre in time to prevent new outbreaks of imperialist strife.

This is not a dream. Genuine socialism may seem very remote from Britain and the United States : but Europe grows riper for

it every day. Hitler, that evil midwife, is bringing it to birth from the womb of twentieth-century anarchy and strife: and there, as if by some special beneficence, is the Soviet Union on the eastern frontier, already socialist, and able, by the mere fact of its socialist existence, to give a stability to the younger socialism which otherwise might have been impossible. The European revolution is, in sober truth, not merely a possibility but a probability: let us make it certain.

And this brings us to the second objection. Will not British and American capitalism be strong enough to prevent a European revolution? And shall not we, the ordinary men and women of Britain, be powerless to give it effective aid?

II

As was said before, Europe will not go socialist in a day, nor in any orderly or uniform manner. The process will be spread, certainly over many months, and probably over several years: there will be patches, enclaves, rivalries, cross-currents, counter-revolutionary movements, and all the many strifes that must always accompany the birth of a new system. But it is not difficult to foresee, in a very broad and general way, how the revolution will start, and what can be done to help or hinder it.

"Only Hitler's fools" said Stalin in a speech to the Moscow Soviet on November 6th 1941 "do not understand that it is not only the European rear, but also the German rear and the German fascist army, which is a volcano ready for eruption and ready to bury Hitler's adventurers." Here is, explicitly, the antithesis to Vansittart's analysis, and, by implication, the antithesis to his cure. The revolution must and will start with the revolt of the German army, which is led by the officer corps, but is now simply that part of the German people that is bearing arms. When Hitler is beaten or can no longer conceal the certainty of defeat, the German people will turn its arms against the officers, the Gestapo and the regime, and the revolution will be on.

Here—in the people in arms—will be the beginning of a revolutionary government. Will they be able to form one? Will the soldiers, in alliance with the workers in mine and shop and factory, be able to establish their rule? If they are helped, and above all if they are not hindered, yes. The question is sometimes put, where are the nuclei for such a movement? Where is the organised body, with its plans and blueprints, ready to take the leadership? Such questions are very formalistic. There is, in the German working class, a socialist tradition which a decade of

Hitler has suppressed but, as we saw in Chapter VI, has certainly not erased. Its communist movement of many millions was the strongest, outside Russia, in the world : and Germany was both birthplace and focal point of the modern socialist movement from which communism and social democracy have alike developed. These two parties, the communists and social democrats, polled between them 11,877,615 votes, or 35 per cent. of the total cast (as against the Nazi 44 per cent.—only 9 per cent. higher) *after* Hitler had already come to power and established his terror. It is in this setting, and not among a socially backward proletariat, that the revolutionary situation will develop. Moreover, in spite of the Gestapo and in spite of war there are revolutionary cells today in underground Germany : organisations of a few men here and a few men there, keeping contact, in spite of almost insuperable difficulties, the one with the other. Finally, the outrage to religion, which is already causing widespread revolt, will bring into being organised bodies of anti-Nazi militants when the time is ripe. Is it utopian to imagine that, in such a situation, a revolutionary leadership will develop out of the day by day necessities of what must be—inevitably and healthfully, however much we may detest the continuance even for a day of strife in any form—a period of civil war ?

Meanwhile—the word must be used, but the relative timing of the movements cannot be guessed—a parallel state of affairs will be occurring in some of the occupied countries, and especially in by far the most important of them, France. There a widespread network of underground groups, combining the old radical elements but organised on a new basis and cutting across previous party divisions, is rapidly forming : and all of them are opposed equally to Vichy and to the Nazis. When the German army of occupation and the Gestapo have fled or laid down their arms, can it be imagined for a moment that the France of 1789 and 1830 and 1848 and the Commune will not find itself again ?

We do not know where the British army will be when these events take place. It may be in Britain ; it may be in France ; it may be in Berlin. But wherever it is, on what it does the future of millions will depend, not only in Germany and Britain and France but in the remotest corners of a world now so unified that a telephone order on Wall Street may starve to death a cotton grower by the Nile. *Will the British army say to the German people "Go ahead and overthrow, utterly and for ever, your militarists and junkers and industrialists and Gestapo" : will it say this, holding the ring or helping them to do it : or will it, instead, turn its own arms against the German people, and either set up, in the name of law and order, a respectable" conservative and capitalist regime*

of Germans, from which another Hitler will come, or, in the name of this same law and order, administer the country itself, inevitably relying on these same conservative elements and, in due course, handing back to them the reins of power? And shall we similarly allow or support revolutionary governments in France and elsewhere, or shall we rather set about restoring, in one form or another, the old regimes?

This is where the reader's second doubt comes in. For he is thinking that, unless genuine socialism has been established in Britain and America, or at the very least in Britain, we shall certainly fight against and not for the German revolution.

Before answering that doubt, another possibility must be mentioned, and one which, for a very good reason, has so far been kept out of this book. The possibility is that, at some period of the war, the Soviet armies may sweep across Poland and occupy Germany and even France—in fact, all Europe.

No doubt it is a possibility. Some deny this, believing that, however completely Germany may be defeated, the Soviet Union will have been so weakened that a temporary, not to say a permanent, occupation of Europe by it will be out of the question. I am not so sure: perhaps, since December 1941, others are not so sure either. Nevertheless such a development is, for many reasons, highly improbable. Beyond that one cannot go. Even Marxists, who have been able to predict with remarkable accuracy how everybody else was going to behave, have nearly always been wrong about the Soviet Union.

The occupation and ruling—for that is what it would amount to—of Europe by the Soviet Union has not been considered in this book, for a sufficient reason. If it happens, the problem we have been discussing disappears, and another one takes its place. The issue would be, not Vansittartism, but “Stalinisation.”

No one, however, who writes about the future of Europe can evade the responsibility of answering the plain question: would you welcome “Stalinisation”? No, I would not. It must be repeated that some measure of stern repression is no doubt necessary in the early stages of every revolution: and, quite apart from the Russian tradition and the whole background of Russian history, any liberalising of Soviet institutions up to the present time might well have involved, in Russian conditions, a price too high for her to pay. But it must also be repeated that there is, no less, a European tradition; and, knowing well the difficulty of reconciling large-scale planning with personal freedom, and knowing also how vital it is to guard against the smallest possibility of counter-revolution, I still am most passionately anxious that liberty and mercy shall be, within the compass of

possibility, the watchwords of European socialism. And particularly of German socialism. It is above all from the absence, in the State power, of any feeling for liberty, democracy and mercy that Germany has suffered : but so strong has this feeling always been in the German socialist movement that many of the defeats of that movement can be largely attributed to it. The German social democrats refused to compromise with their democratic and humanitarian tradition even when power for Hitler was the alternative. They have at last, it is to be firmly believed, learned their lesson ; and what is now to be prayed for is that, the split between social democrats and communists finally healed, a united German socialism may combine a sense of power, and the determination to achieve it, with a firm resolve to modify its democracy to the degree, but only to the degree, which the safeguarding of the revolution imperatively demands.

So I do not want " Stalinisation "—quite apart from the fact that the ruling or domination, direct or indirect, of any one country by any other is abhorrent. But if I had to say which, as a *fait accompli*, I should think better, a " Stalinised " Europe or the *ancien régime* restored : Russian bolshevism or a chaos of sovereign capitalist States : then deliberately and after full reflection I should give my vote to Stalin. For the alternative means a drive to the worst of human evils, war and fascism ; whereas Soviet civilisation, which has already achieved so many triumphs, may yet turn out to be, after a process of evolution and in respect even of those values that western liberals hold particularly precious, the finest ever known.

* * * * *

To return : If Britain and America, or Britain at least, have not by then become socialist, won't the British Army, if it's in Berlin, inevitably fight against the revolution, and, if it's not, won't it march on Berlin to do so ? That is what we are supposing the reader to ask.

Now it is clear that, the more socialist we are, the less likelihood there will be of this disaster : and that alone would make a struggle here and now, and as every opportunity arises, to weaken the domestic forces of monopoly capitalism, and to get them out of their trenches, vital. Nothing that follows must be taken to imply the smallest weakening in this sense of urgency. Nevertheless the question arises from a failure to distinguish between what a capitalist society can and cannot do in the presence of a

virile democratic tradition and a strong and highly organised working-class movement.

However widely diffused a democratic or even a socialist sentiment may be among the people at large, a capitalist society—a society whose whole machinery turns on the profit motive : whose great industrial and banking trusts own, absolutely, all the productive resources of the country and operate them for their own advantage : whose business and financial magnates either control the governmental power or thwart it if it happens to be reformist—such a capitalist society cannot fail to pursue, in general and over a period, a capitalist policy. It is industry and finance that make the wheels go round : and how the industrialists and financiers act must inevitably determine the broad general pattern of the country's activity. This merger or understanding with a foreign combine : that scrapping of our own shipyards to "rationalise" and keep up profits : the passing through Parliament of some "safeguarding" legislation, as well as a foreign policy shaped for the advantage, from time to time, of predominant interests : these are the strands from which the patchwork carpet is woven. With a press in the main controlled by these same interests, the public can have little knowledge and still less understanding of what is afoot : if it is aware, and realises the significance, of a particular move, it cannot see it in relation to other moves, or appreciate where, in their haphazard combination, all these moves will end : and even if it wishes in some special case to protest, with a capitalist or at best a weak reformist government in power it cannot commonly make its protest effective—apart altogether from the fact that the crucial moves, the moves that drive to a policy which is in fact already a *fait accompli* when it comes into the open for approval and ratification, are made in secret. That is why, however democratic, on paper, the constitution, however peace-loving the public and even the capitalists, however sincere the desire of employers and statesmen to abolish unemployment, democratic capitalism nevertheless involves, by the nature of the capitalism and in spite of the democracy, unemployment and war.

But, for all that, democratic capitalism is *democratic* capitalism : it is not fascism, and one of the greatest errors of a section of the left, at an earlier stage of the war, was to imagine or at least to say that the difference was negligible. If a government, however strongly entrenched, attempts to do something the full significance of which, as a single isolated action, can at once be fully realised : if the action is of such moment that it cannot be concealed from any man or woman in the country : and if it outrages to a sufficiently intolerable degree a section of the public big and potentially powerful enough to make its voice quite unmistakably

and threateningly heard ; then the government can be, and has been, forced to retrace its steps. One of the worst of British Governments, with a huge majority and a hatred of the new Russia that was quite insensate, was nevertheless compelled to give up its war of intervention against the Soviet Union by a surge of public sentiment, by such incidents as the spontaneous refusal of London dockers on May 12th 1920 to load the *Jolly George* with munitions destined for Poland, and above all by the formation, *as a result of this working-class pressure*, of the Council of Action, consisting of the Trades Union Congress, the Labour Party and the Parliamentary Labour Party. The Council summoned a Congress, which turned out to be the biggest ever held in the history of the British Labour Movement, and which decided to take industrial action in the event of the Government declaring war on the Soviets in order to aid Poland. Mr. Churchill testifies in his *Aftermath of the War* that it was this threat which dictated a radical change in the Government's policy.

At a later period a tremendous outburst of popular indignation drove Sir Samuel Hoare from office after the publication of the Hoare-Laval Plan for appeasing Italy at the expense of Abyssinia ; and if the protest was not finally successful, this does not affect the fact that for the time being it succeeded, just as success had been final in the former instance.

That the British working class to-day has a very real feeling of solidarity with other working classes is proved beyond any possibility of doubt by the events of the last few months. It is nonsensically untrue that " the proletariat has no fatherland " : on the contrary, the workers love their country with a devotion which is as deep as it is undemonstrative. But they also feel themselves united by specially close ties with the working classes of other countries. When the Soviet Union was attacked, there was not merely an increase of tempo in the factories : there was a spirit totally new in kind and quality. It is often said that this enthusiasm is not for the Soviet Union as the " motherland of socialism " but for Russia as a national state defending itself with breath-taking heroism against our common enemy. I am sure that this estimate is wrong. Admiration for Russian heroism and determination is no doubt an element in the situation : but it is not the essential one. Nor has socialism very much to do with the matter. The fact is that, irrespective of whether or not they would wish to live under a Bolshevik regime, and in spite of the confusion caused by the Nazi-Soviet pact, latent all the time in wide sections of the British working class was the feeling, and it was fundamentally correct, that somehow or other the Soviet Union stood for the working class and the people. And, given

its opportunity, this feeling came alive in that deep and persisting enthusiasm which shows where the heart is.

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If, but only if, Vansittartism is prevented from getting a great and increasing grip on the British public, and from inducing a mood of hatred and suspicion of the whole German people, Britain and America, however capitalist their structures, will not be allowed to strike down and destroy the German revolution, and to set up a counter-revolutionary government in its place. A sufficient majority of the public, and above all of the working-class, would say "no" as effectively as they said it twenty years or so back: and any Government, whatever its desire, would have to listen, or to give place to one that would.

But if the British public is emotionally inflamed to the point of lusting for the destruction of Germany, instead of being determined that the German people shall once and for all, and for the good of the whole world, destroy their own oppressors, then indeed there is little hope.

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It will be that initial phase of the war's end—a matter, probably, of no more than weeks—on which the future will depend. If during that period counter-revolution, in however respectable a form, is allowed to establish itself in Germany and to predominate in Europe generally, then we shall be back in 1918. American influence will be stronger: the Soviet Union, instead of beginning to build, will be beginning to reconstruct: and there will be no immediate threat of French hegemony. Otherwise, in our hemisphere at least, it will all be much as before, and the best we can hope for is not too bad a variation of 1918 to 1939.

But if this first battle is won, the future of Europe will still be in question, for there must be, as the second phase of the struggle, a long period of uncertainty and fluctuating developments. In the crucial areas of Germany and Austria and France young revolutionary governments will be the target for dispossessed elements of every kind, which in varying combinations will do all in their power to sap and undermine regimes which have doomed them to impotence. Elsewhere, for instance in Czechoslovakia, there may be a liberal government of socialistic tinge: in a few places, probably, outright reaction will be in uneasy control, but fighting for its life against the rising people. From this flux will emerge either a stable federation of socialist republics, or a Europe dominated by one or more fascisms.

British and American policy will be a pivotal factor in deciding the issue of the second phase no less than of the first. Does that appear to ignore the Soviet Union? If it does, this is because, first, her policy cannot be foreseen, and, secondly, we are speaking of what we ourselves can do to influence events. Apart from the Soviet occupation of Europe that has already been considered, there seem to be three courses of action open to our ally. She might, without any attempt to impose her own regime, actively assist a total German and European revolution. Or she might withdraw behind her existing frontiers, with perhaps a strong Poland as a *cordon sanitaire*—against whom?—and interest herself only in her own reconstruction. Or, desiring above all an immediately stable world in which to reconstruct, as well as Anglo-American help for that purpose, she might for the time being go hand in hand with Anglo-American capitalism. But it is foolish to prophesy, and in any event we must, for our present purpose, regard British policy as all important.

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Britain and America will show their hands in this second phase by the nature of their policy in two respects: by the nature of their earlier food policy and by the nature of their later loan policy. Will they co-operate for the distribution of food to the starving populations with the progressive or, instead, with the reactionary forces? Will they lend or, better, give, with the single-minded aim of European reconstruction, providing capital and credit to those who are equally single-minded? Or will they, as governments or capitalists, lend for immediate profit, and at the same time for the support of their opposite capitalist numbers? Usurers, or men with a care for the common and permanent good of Europe, and not of Europe alone—they must be the one or the other, and on the choice will depend the happiness of a continent and a world.

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It would be foolish to pretend that, if monopoly capitalism persists into the post-war period in Britain, which is probable, and in the United States, which is almost certain, the drive to reactionary food and loan policies will not be great and, in the case of loans, terrific. But there are three counterbalancing considerations. First, if the previous battle has been won—if the initial revolutionary movements have not been suppressed by armed intervention, which is a necessity so overriding that we dare let nothing, no natural anger, no hatred for Nazi abominations, even no honourable instinct for retributive justice, play into the hands of men who, sometimes consciously and sometimes

not, would use us for interests very different from those of the common people anywhere—if the previous battle has been won, the mere existence of militant socialism on the Continent, able to make known both its necessities and the perils that might end it, must render the task of capitalist sabotage more difficult of accomplishment. Secondly, this period will be a long one, of gains here and losses there: setbacks will not mean, as would defeat in the earlier phase, the loss of everything. Finally and by far the most important, this will be a time of great and protracted political struggle in Britain itself.

There is a considerable underestimate of the extent to which the British public has come to political adolescence during the war. Immediate perils, the justified popularity of Mr. Churchill as a national leader, an absolutely necessary preoccupation with war work, the political truce, fear of being thought unpatriotic, the concentration of smaller newspapers on the pressing needs of the hour, the general atmosphere of public conformity which war inevitably produces—these are among the factors which mask the real situation and conceal it from the eyes of the casual observer. But under the surface things are very different. Great masses of people who before the war were careless of their citizenship, were “not interested in politics,” are waking up at last. Everywhere there is perplexity, questioning, criticism, indignation, and even sometimes blazing anger: they ask, these people, how it all happened, and are determined to do away with whatever it is—“and what is it?”—that has brought the world to its present pass. The feeling is vague and confused and ill-directed: and nothing would be easier than for unscrupulous men, with an instinct for playing on the masses, to use it for the vilest ends. But it can also be used as the dynamic of progress: and the war, which has brought it into being, has also made an increasing number of men determined, as never before, to make political leadership the motive of their lives.

I shall be told that, on the contrary, everybody will be so tired and bored after the war that the one idea will be to “settle down” and get back to “normal life.” Not for a moment do I believe it. It hasn’t been that sort of war. The questioning has been too widespread: the determination to “find a way out,” however latent, is too real. When the end comes, it can be the occasion for a release of political energy on a scale never before known or dreamed of in this country. It is the job of every single man and woman, all the politically conscious workers “by hand or brain” who think they know the major cause of the world’s trouble and the cure, to hold themselves ready to seize an opportunity which, if lost, will almost certainly never recur. If they begin wondering

now whether people won't be too tired, or too bored, or too something else, then of course we are defeated before we start. The "interests" never make the mistake of wondering whether this move or that, which might even conceivably strengthen their position, is likely to be successful. They just go ahead and see.

Whence the unifying leadership will come in the great post-war political campaigns—I mean for genuine socialism, for transferring from private to public ownership the banks, the land, the mines, the transport, and all the great productive resources of the nation—cannot be foreseen: but my own faith is firm that, come whence it may, it will come. Will it give us socialism during, say, the five years that will follow the war? Probably not. But it can be powerful enough to force such concessions from finance and monopoly as to weaken the base of capitalism and prepare the way for the next stage.

In this struggle, the home front and the foreign, and especially the European, front will be one. By the struggle at home, we shall be challenging the power of those who would restore capitalism to Europe: by revealing and attacking the plans of our own capitalism in Europe, we shall be intensifying the struggle at home. Under both heads, we shall be helping the European revolution. The conflict will be long and hard; but, against the background of the war, we shall not be impotent.

CHAPTER XI.—"WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT IT NOW?"

This book has not, however, been written with any intention of considering, what is at once a vitally important and an exceedingly difficult question, how best to achieve socialism in Britain, or a move towards it, now or after the war. My purpose has been altogether simpler.

At a time when objectivity is everywhere menaced by fascism, the false history and grotesque view of the modern world that Vansittartism presents to the credulous are lamentable enough: but it is in the emotional mood which is induced by its selection of facts and interpretation of events that its greatest peril lies. For, seeming to appeal to reason, it is to two emotions that it in truth appeals—the bad one of hatred and thirst for revenge, and the good but so easily pervertible one of moral indignation. The "facts" provide a justification or excuse for the hatred, and heighten it: and to the moral sense, outraged by all the lust and cruelty around us and seeking cause and cure, they appear to give, in both regards, a satisfactory answer. This appeal is facili-

tated by the emotional note of hatred and moral indignation that is latent in the logic and realism with which Vansittart seems to present his case. The moral indignation is perfectly genuine ; of the hatred, the cause of which discerning readers will discover in *Black Record* itself, he is, we may believe, in all honesty unaware.

Whatever its motive—and I have never doubted Vansittart's sincerity, which is not to imply a similar respect for very many of his newspaper and other supporters—Vansittartism is producing, not a reasoned examination of international problems, about which men may honourably differ, but a mood of savage hatred and blind vindictiveness against the men and women, and even the boys and girls, of Germany. The process has not gone very far ; I like to think that the British people are too kindly and decent for that. But who knows where, in the perspective of a long war, this contagion may end ?

Does Vansittart himself realise what he is doing ? He speaks of the spiritual regeneration of the German people ; but this is how his readers speak :

"We shall smash the Hun all right, but then the softies will want to be 'tolerant.' Why, even now you hear people say that we must 're-educate' this sadistic race ! Much better to make Lord Vansittart's *Black Record* compulsory reading in every school and home, it would teach people a few facts and a little plain logic. For the good of everyone the Hun nation must simply disappear."

This passage occurred in a communication from a schoolmaster (he is a mathematician, not a historian) whom I know to be a decent and honourable man. That is how Vansittartism is issuing.

I must quote, also, from a letter addressed to me by one of our allies, a squadron leader in the R.A.F., protesting against something I had written. My purpose is not to criticise a man whose country, and perhaps his wife or mother, have been most horribly outraged : but can any good come from reinforcing a hatred as blistering as this ?

"REVENGE will be taken, and in the most cruel way, more cruel than Nazi barbarism. It will be applied to the GERMAN PEOPLE as a whole and as a punishment, to an extent never heard in history and never to be forgotten by the German people for the coming thousand years" [capitals and underlining as in the original].

If this mood of revenge and hatred for the whole German people were to spread to the point of becoming decisive, it would be impossible to contemplate the future without despair. 1918 may

profitably be called to mind. "Hang the Kaiser" and "Make the Germans pay": this was the spirit of the electorate, and it was in this spirit that they sent to Westminster a collection of men as mean and selfish as any that has ever directed our affairs. It seems probable that Mr. Lloyd George, incapable though he was of seeking a radical solution and representative of forces that desired anything but that, nevertheless wanted something a little better than Versailles; and if public opinion and Parliament had been behind him, he and Wilson might have been strong enough to get it. But public opinion (initially) and Parliament had less vision even than he. And remember that the Kaiser was not Hitler, "Prussian militarism" was something very different from Nazism, and there had been in the earlier war no organised propaganda of the Vansittart type. This time, unless we see to it, the mood may be far worse.

What Vansittart can do by one kind of appeal can be undone by another. And here is an answer to the question "What can I do about it now?" Above all, try to discover the truth. You have read Vansittart: and you have read the pages in which, very imperfectly, and not by way of debate but because no one can allow to go unchallenged what he believes to be false, I have attempted to reply. I ask no more than that you should consider whether I have made out a case worthy, not perhaps yet of credence, but at least of further investigation. If so, read carefully the few books in the list at the end, and form your own conclusions. And if you come to the view that in some such ideas as those expressed in these pages lies the way forward, help others to understand what you have understood. In this way you will be instrumental in creating a public mood which will give us co-operation and life instead of power and destruction. Even if you have totally rejected my plea for a socialist solution, ask yourself whether, whatever the solution, anything but disaster can come from fostering a spirit of hatred and revenge.

I should like to end by paraphrasing the two last sentences of *Black Record*:

"On them, on the British public, on every man Jack, every babe Jack, in this tried and United Kingdom, has been laid an honour, far greater than any Vansittart could ever dream, of helping—in their still, small way—to build a world of co-operative plenty, of international brotherhood and of enduring peace."

PART II.

THE ATLANTIC CHARTER

The Allies have published a forecast of their peace aims, in the Eight Points of what has come to be known as the Atlantic Charter. This is an Anglo-American document. It is a statement, by President Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill, of "certain common principles in the national policies of their respective countries"—i.e., of the United States of America and Great Britain. The Soviet Union, the Allies, and the Self-Governing Dominions have subsequently accepted the Charter; but it is not the product of discussions in which they took part, nor does it necessarily represent the wishes even of the British and American peoples: for while the British people, for instance, overwhelmingly support Mr. Churchill as a war leader, there is no evidence whatever to show, one way or the other, whether they agree with his ideas of the peace. The Atlantic Charter is, in fact, simply the *obiter dictum* of two men, Mr. Churchill and President Roosevelt.

Its temper is very different from that of the Vansittartites. But does it represent a first step in the direction of the socialist Europe and the international socialist world which has been advocated in this book? The answer must, unfortunately, be in the negative. What the Charter really contemplates, as will appear, is a return to the golden age of 1924 to 1929. It looks to a Europe and a world benevolently dominated by an Anglo-American capitalism which has learned the lessons of the period from the Versailles Treaty of 1919 to the Dawes Plan of 1924, but not the equally important ones of the slump of 1929 and the fascist offensive which followed it, and which culminated in the attack on Poland and now in a whole world at war. Before, however, we turn to a consideration of the Charter, three preliminary observations should be made.

1. If the choice has to be between a world dominated *either* by Hitler fascism *or* by Anglo-American capitalism, there cannot be a moment's hesitation as to where our choice must lie. A prominent socialist once said that the difference between a Churchill victory and a Hitler victory was merely the difference between ninety-nine per cent. of evil and a hundred per cent. On the contrary, the difference has always been infinite, as well before the Soviet Union was involved as after: the difference between hopelessness and hope. An Allied victory, if followed, to put it at its worst, by a return to 1924,

would mean the probability of a third world war ten or twenty or fifty years later: but it would also mean the possibility of struggle by popular forces everywhere, as well as, and not least important, the continued existence of the Soviet Union as a socialist base. There was and is the hope that, whatever the settlement, these elements in combination might prove strong enough to transform the international scene in time to prevent the threatened clash. But the victory of Hitler, followed by a fascist-totalitarian organisation of the world, would put an end to any possibility of advance.

2. The Atlantic Charter, in which President Roosevelt's voice speaks louder than Mr. Churchill's, is permeated through and through with the spirit of liberalism. This is not in practice of great importance: for what matters most is not the sentiment expressed, but how it will be interpreted, or even whether it will be given any actuality at all, by what are from time to time the dominant forces. The history of the League of Nations is full of "reservations," as well as of downright repudiation, when the interests of this Power or of that were directly involved. Mr. Churchill had hardly returned to England before he expressly excluded India from the scope of the most important clause in the Charter: and the phrase "with due respect for their existing obligations" so limits Clause Four as to make it not only meaningless but even, and on a strictly 1924 to 1929 basis, positively harmful. Yet the liberalism of the Charter, if not of great importance, is of some. What we should be fighting for is to preserve the liberal tradition, and at last to give it universal actuality by transforming the economics of society. In such a struggle, and faced with an enemy who preaches the domination of lesser breeds by the Herrenvolk as well as tyranny and obedience among the Herrenvolk themselves, even lip-service to "no aggrandisement," "the freely expressed wishes of the peoples," "the right of all peoples to choose the form of Government," "collaboration between all nations," "peace," and "the abandonment of the use of force"—even such lip-service is of value. Nor is it only lip-service: it is a genuine belief in these ideals, rendered ineffective partly by an inability to understand what they in practice involve and partly by a refusal to implement them when the sacrifice of personal or "national" interests would be thereby required.

3. If the Charter, far from being a step towards socialism, contemplates a return to 1924, why has the Soviet Union adhered to it? For, it may be imagined, a number of reasons. For instance: (a) *Compared with the aims of fascism, the pro-*

gramme is in the highest category of progress ; (b) At the moment, what is wanted is the greatest measure of unity among the Allies, and not only on the military front : (c) From the specifically Soviet point of view, maximum aid from Britain and America is essential, and any bickering about peace aims might diminish it : (d) Most important of all, the interpretation of the Charter at the end of the war, or even whether it will have any validity at all, will depend on the situation and the then existing balance of forces. M. Maisky, in his speech endorsing the Charter on September 24th 1941, pointed out that " the practical application of these principles will necessarily adapt itself to the circumstances, needs and historic peculiarities of particular countries " : and he stressed, too, the Soviet fight for " complete and general disarmament."

The acceptance of the Charter by the Soviet Union is, therefore, fully intelligible, and, in view especially of (c) and (d) in combination, may very well be correct. I personally regret it, and wish that the Soviet Union had thought fit not only to stimulate a German revolt, as it has consistently done, but also to put forward a programme which could have rallied the forces of international socialism without endangering Allied support : but this may have been impossible. It is also not excluded that, for the reason given in Chapter X, the Charter does broadly express the Soviet view of, in all the circumstances, a desirable settlement.

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Here is the full text of the Charter :

The President of the United States and the Prime Minister, Mr. Churchill, representing His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, being met together, deem it right to make known certain common principles in the national policies of their respective countries on which they base their hopes for a better future of the world.

FIRST, their countries seek no aggrandisement, territorial or other.

SECOND, they desire to see no territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned.

THIRD, they respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of Government under which they will live ; and they wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them.

FOURTH, they will endeavour, with due respect for their existing obligations, to further enjoyment by all States, great or small, victor or vanquished, of access, on equal terms, to the trade and to the raw materials of the world which are needed for their economic prosperity.

FIFTH, they desire to bring about the fullest collaboration between all nations in the economic field, with the object of securing for all improved labour standards, economic advancement, and social security.

SIXTH, after the final destruction of Nazi tyranny, they hope to see established a peace which will afford to all nations the means of dwelling in safety within their own boundaries, and which will afford assurance that all the men in all the lands may live out their lives in freedom from fear and want.

SEVENTH, such a peace should enable all men to traverse the high seas and oceans without hindrance.

EIGHTH, they believe all of the nations of the world, for realistic as well as spiritual reasons, must come to the abandonment of the use of force. Since no future peace can be maintained if land, sea, or air armaments continue to be employed by nations which threaten, or may threaten, aggression outside of their frontiers, they believe, pending the establishment of a wider and permanent system of general security, that the disarmament of such nations is essential. They will likewise aid and encourage all other practicable measures which will lighten for peace-loving peoples the crushing burden of armament.

I

THE ECONOMIC CLAUSES

Look first at the clauses or parts of clauses which deal narrowly with economics. They are clause IV, clause V, the last word of clause VI, and clause VII.

It is at once clear that no smallest change is contemplated in the monopoly capitalist basis of society. In Britain, in the United States, in Europe generally, in Germany, in Japan, in every country where it at present reigns—in every industrial country, that is to say, except the Soviet Union—monopoly capitalism is taken for granted. Nothing else in the Charter can alter this crucial fact. And that alone would be sufficient to make it certain that, if the argument of this book is sound, the proposed settlement is doomed to failure, and must make another world-war all but inevitable.

No one suggests that the Atlantic Charter, with such sponsors, could have been a socialist document, or that, by some improbable miracle, Mr. Churchill might suddenly have begun to speak in the accents of Marx. But what is, not indeed extraordinary, but to be most carefully observed, is that no first faltering approach is made, on some small patch of the field, towards the most gradual

cure of the real evils that produced 1939. To anticipate, take the question of armaments, which is fundamental. What is essential is the *internationalisation* of both the manufacture and the use of instruments of war. To have expected such a necessity to be so much as hinted at in the Charter would have been naïf in the extreme; but even the *nationalisation* of armaments in the victor countries, even the national ownership and control of armaments by the victors in a world in which, by express provision of the Charter, the vanquished are to be disarmed, is not only omitted from the document but, so patent and glaring is the omission, must have been deliberately excluded. For not only socialists but liberals of every shade have understood and explained for several decades, with a wealth of concrete illustration, that the private manufacture of armaments, the damnable exploitation of torment and death for the purpose of financial gain, is one of the most potent of all the more specialised causes of war: indeed, as finance-capitalism passes into armament-finance-capitalism, it is the most potent. And as we shall see, a failure to nationalise the armament trusts would make the disarmament of Germany, even in the comparatively short run, all but impossible, irrespectively of whether such disarmament in an armed world is desirable, and additionally to the fact that such disarmament is for other reasons also impossible. Mr. Churchill and the President know this at least as well as I; nevertheless they do not propose to nationalise the armament industries of their respective countries.

The fact must be faced that the Charter proposes no change whatever in the system of monopoly capitalisms, competing the one with the other, and using the armed power of sovereign States for the furthering of their interests by war or the threat of it; and by its omission to do so it strengthens the system in the very midst of a war which has resulted from it. The disarmament of the vanquished may at first sight appear to introduce a modification by excluding them, not from the area of competition, but from the power to make it effective; but even this modification is one in appearance only, for given the continuance of monopoly capitalism (except in the Soviet Union) it is highly probable, as we shall see, that Germany will in fact rearm and be helped to rearm, just as the disarmament clauses of Versailles were followed by rearmament on a scale greater than, twenty or even ten years ago, would have seemed conceivable.

I have said that the Charter proposes no change whatever in the system of competing monopoly capitalisms. This sentence must now be rewritten in a more precise form, and as follows. It proposes no change in the monopoly capitalist basis of inter-

national society : it appears and indeed benevolently desires to substitute co-operation between the various monopoly capitalisms for competition between them : but as such co-operation is in fact neither possible nor for a moment desired by the monopoly capitalists themselves, what it really drives to is a unified, a sort of static, super-capitalism, in which the minor capitalisms are subordinated to and regulated by the major capitalism—Anglo-American capitalism, with the accent on American. In other words—I put it crudely, nor am I attributing any conscious machiavellianism to the President and Mr. Churchill—the world is to be exploited by Anglo-American capitalism, with Britain as the junior partner, and with pickings for the subordinate capitalisms, including the German : and war is to be prevented by the process of subordination and regulation, by the retention in Anglo-American hands of overwhelming military strength, and by the permanent disarmament of a Germany which might otherwise emerge strong enough, at some later date, to defy the dominant power and attempt once again, by force of arms, to seize the leading place. The popular Press describes what is to happen in the authentic language of the White Man's Burden : "When this war is over," writes the *Sunday Graphic*—on December 28th 1941, at the end of the six months during which the Soviet Union had been saving the world, as we had saved it during the previous phase—"the English-speaking races must assume the leadership of civilisation or else hand the world over to a thousand years of anarchy."

Such a static super-capitalism is perfectly possible, as some of us argued with a school of socialists many years ago ; but it is possible, as we also argued, only when the super-capitalism is definitely fascist, and only when the fascism controls, if not the whole world, at least an area large enough to make any serious challenge to it from the rest of the world impossible. By fascism we mean a system under which all other peoples and economies are subject to the dominant fascist Power, under which the workers are so regimented that no challenge from them can become effective, and under which the capitalism of the fascist Power itself is regulated, for the sake of retaining capitalism, either by a dictator in alliance with the strongest group of capitalists or by that group itself : and regulated with the utmost ruthlessness, and at the cost of great "sacrifices" by the lesser groups of capitalists and even of some "sacrifice" by the dominant ones. If it is not to be disrupted, such a system requires iron obedience, which has to be made automatic by conditioning its victims, at home and abroad, to a contempt for the sacredness of human personality : it requires, that is to say, the fascist

ideology. To sum it up, super-capitalism can become static and "peaceful" only when it has accepted slavery, has consecrated self-assertion and suppressed co-operation, and, in a word, has abandoned civilisation. Even so, it can only look forward to "a thousand years of peace" if and when it has conquered the Soviet Union.

This fascist organisation of the world is contemplated by that complex of forces which we call by the name of Hitler: they are at the moment engaged in endeavouring to put it into effect. But it is not contemplated either by the Prime Minister or by the President: and if it were, the peoples of Britain and the United States, such is their history and tradition, would find the means of preventing it before the hour had struck. What the Charter contemplates is, not fascism, but, as we have said, a return to 1924.

There are, in fact, two ways by which a unified world could find enduring peace. Universal fascism, death, is the one way: international socialism, life, is the other. But the framers of the Charter see a third way—a kind of "free" capitalism (in the age of giant national and international trusts!) under the guidance and control of British and American interests. Since capitalism by its nature seeks the maximum profit, no one could deny that British and American control would be exercised for the advantage of Britain and America: but the reply would probably be that, under the "free" arrangements suggested in the Charter, the advantage of one would be the advantage of all. A return to "enlightened self-interest"—which, before the rise of monopoly capitalism, had some meaning.

In order to explain more clearly what is meant by a return to 1924, it will be worth while very briefly to recapitulate the history of 1919 to 1939, at which we have already glanced in the first part of this book.

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Versailles had two major objects: on the one hand the disarmament of Germany, and on the other the crippling of her industry by certain of the territorial changes, by the handing over of her merchant shipping, and by reparations. But British and American interests speedily discovered that to cripple her industry too completely was not to their immediate advantage. There was the threat of French hegemony: there was the danger of Bolshevism in the heart of Europe: and there was the fear of a growing disorganisation of world trade if the German chaos were to continue. Would it not, therefore, be better, on all counts, to re-establish the prosperity of German capitalism, by lending her

the capital with which to revive her industries? Surely this would be to everybody's advantage: for she would pay interest on the loan, she would pay reparations out of the profits of the re-created industries, she would provide an admirable market for trade and investment, she would become a counterpoise to France, and her strengthened capitalism, as well as the lessened misery of the masses, would make Bolshevism less likely? Yes, this was obvious sanity: and so the Dawes plan of 1924 won the day. But, lest she should grow *too* strong and again become a menace, disarmament must remain. Moreover, her dependence on foreign, and predominantly American, money would place her in tutelage: if trouble brewed, the foreign capital would have the whip hand.

The reality was very different from the dream. Everything failed: the mutual prosperity, the tutelage, the disarmament. Five years after Dawes came the world slump: five more, and Germany's rearmament was in full swing, assisted by her late enemies: another five, and she was able, by all but a hair's breadth, to conquer the world. And there are those who imagine that all this occurred because we did not smash Germany completely enough! They do not understand that we *had* to try to cripple Germany, then to repair the damage, then to involve ourselves in the slump, then to rearm her, and finally to appease her until she was strong enough to challenge us. We had to do these things because "we" were controlled by our monopoly capitalists, and monopoly capitalism is compelled by its own inner necessity to act, in every situation, for its own gain, since otherwise it would not be monopoly capitalism. And the world slump of 1929 was as inevitable under our present system, which cannot equate consumption with production, as was the decision both to adopt the Dawes plan and to "build Germany up" during the fascist period.

The years 1924 to 1929 were of a comparative and deceptive prosperity. But the slump of 1929 was a slump from which there was no real recovery. The relative "freedom" of trade of the preceding period had vanished, never to return: instead there were tariff wars, currency wars, autarchy, self-sufficiency, economic nationalism, fences and barriers everywhere, vast programmes of rearmament, and, sounding always in the base, the *leitmotiv* of coming war. In 1939 it came.

The President and the Prime Minister have their eyes firmly fixed on 1924 to 1929. They would avoid the mistake of 1919 to 1924—the attempt to cripple German economy: they would avoid, also, the features of 1929 to 1939 which most obviously heralded the coming war, though indeed they were merely symptoms of

the disease—the economic nationalism and the rest. Simultaneously, remembering that Germany, forbidden to rearm by Versailles, nevertheless rearmed with their assistance, they would see to it that this mistake is not repeated, and therefore—they must forbid her to rearm. After all, it all worked very well from 1924 to 1929. Cannot it this time, if we start at 1924, be made to work permanently? Back to 1924!

But can it?

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We see now the real meaning of Clause Four, which is pivotal among the economic clauses of the Charter, and the inner significance of which has been so widely misunderstood. It can only mean that when the time comes an "endeavour" will be made to remove the most obvious symptom of the pre-1939 decade—economic nationalism—while leaving the disease untouched. But if the disease remains, either that symptom or another will recur. Nevertheless, this is what is proposed: the "endeavour" will be made to return to some species of free trade.

By whom will the endeavour be made? If monopoly capitalism persists, it can only be by the monopoly capitalists who control the economic resources of the world. Isn't it perfectly clear that, whatever aspirations the Charter may voice and however honestly it may voice them, these capitalists *must* do whatever their interest in the given situation requires them to do? That if one group wants tariffs in a given situation it will get them if it is strong enough to enforce its demands, and that if another group wants free trade that, too, is what it will get? The various groups cannot avoid playing each for its own hand: the rivalry and competition will again commence—perhaps primarily and initially between Great Britain and the United States.

This post-war process is, of course, already taken for granted by the industrialists of Britain as well as of all other countries. Sir Patrick Hannon, M.P., president of the National Union of Manufacturers, addressing the annual meeting of the Union, is reported* to have said "that it need not be emphasized that apart from the tremendous demands of the war effort thought must be given to the post-war outlook for industry. One was appalled by the magnitude and complexity of the task with which we should then be faced. Not the least important matter would be the release of industry from the concentration imposed upon it by war necessity and in which the Government were bound by promise to play their part.

* *Times*, December 10th 1941.

" It might be safely assumed that *competition in world markets* [my italics] would present altogether new features in the days of peace. The plain fact was that industries which had become interdependent in war-time must continue so afterwards. In the sphere of international trade the exchange of commodities would probably take the form of operations by groups or blocks of industries rather than by individual enterprise, each fighting for its own life.

" The creation of a vast array of secondary industries in the British Commonwealth indicated also the limitations of export vitality in the Dominions and the Colonial Empire. Canada, for example, had concluded most-favoured-nation trade agreements with most of the South American republics. Canadian leaders of industry visualize a large expansion of trade with Latin America. These facts must be noted by British industrialists as an indication of the extent to which markets hitherto open to Great Britain would become much more difficult of access."

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But, it may be objected, surely capital can acquire a longer vision ? Surely it will see that a relative freedom of trade is in the interest of all the capitalisms ? Surely there can be an international agreement on these lines ? No, it will not see it, and there will be no agreement : because it isn't true.

Mention was made at the beginning of this book of " the uneven development of capitalism " which has caused the special explosiveness of Germany in the twentieth century ; and Japan is another example which is now particularly in our minds. There can be no understanding of the international problem unless this uneven development is taken fully into account. The capitalism of one country develops at a different time, and at a different rate, from the capitalism of another country : one capitalism is declining, another advancing : a country, formerly almost exclusively agrarian, industrialises itself and begins to compete on the world market : and in different countries of perhaps approximately identical industrial strength there is uneven development as between the various industries, textiles, perhaps, advancing in the first and declining in the second, and steel advancing in the second and declining in the first. The capitalists of an advancing country want some market which is at the moment dominated by a declining one ; and they set out to get it by building up their military forces, or by allying themselves with groups in other countries whose interests temporarily coincide with their own, or more usually by both. On the basis of uneven development all sorts of constantly shifting combines,

cartels and trusts, national and international, come into being, and push, thrust, attack, defend, for the sole purpose of getting and keeping the biggest possible share of the riches of the world. Even when a couple of huge international trusts come to an agreement for the delimitation of their respective "spheres of influence," the first taking one group of markets and the second another, there is no stability: for the division has been based on the respective strengths of the two parties, and each will endeavour to increase its strength and so tip the balance in its favour. It will increase its strength by political alliances, by increased armaments, by winning over elements in the rival trust, by coming to arrangements with a trust controlling a different raw material or commodity, and in the hundred and one ways which such a situation suggests. Far from giving greater stability, international trustification merely makes it certain that the clash, when it comes, will be on an international scale. International trustification can give stability only when there is one single trust controlling all the great resources of the world, and even so only under fascism.

One can, of course, imagine for one's amusement a World Conference of Capitalists and Financiers issuing a pronunciamiento something like this: "We have been considering the next fifty years. We realise that, if we play each for his own hand, there will be mass poverty, and slumps, and international rivalry, and another devastating war. We want none of these things. We have decided, therefore, to take the longer and the broader view. We will no longer play each for his own hand. We will think, not of our own profit, but of the welfare of the masses, even if they happen to live a long way off and even if we happen to know little of them: and, as for rival capitalists, we will put their interests on an equality with our own, and we will subordinate both to the welfare of the common people. This may, of course, mean that A or B will make less profit next year or in five years' time. But we are not thinking of next year nor yet of the next five years: we are thinking (to be modest) of the next fifty years. And we are not thinking of our own profit: we are thinking of the general good."

Can one seriously imagine such a conference saying anything of the kind, or at any rate meaning it? For if it did, it would imply that, by some miraculous transmutation, the capitalists and financiers had suddenly become socialists: it would imply that they had abrogated the profit motive, which is the essence, the whole meaning, of capitalism. A capitalist cannot even take a reasonably long view of *his own* interest. He has to think of this year's balance sheet, or at the very most of next year's or the

next. He must take the cash and let the credit go—certainly in the unstable world of the twentieth century. He has to think—among other things—of his shareholders: and they will be up in arms if he passes even the interim dividend.

After all, it has been tried, this method of conference and discussion. The World Economic Conference, summoned after the slump, broke up almost before it had met: at the abortive Disarmament Conference Lord Londonderry found it necessary to insist on the retention of the bombing aeroplane: and then there was the League of Nations. Failures, all of them. Because everyone played for his own hand. Because, in the conditions of Imperialism, everyone had to.

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All, therefore, that the Prime Minister and the President are saying in Clause Four and the first sixteen words of Clause Five is "How desirable was 1924 to 1929, in comparison with the preceding and succeeding periods!": and all that will in practice happen, if monopoly capitalism remains dominant, is that what are from time to time the strongest capitalist forces—probably at first the American—will "make their arrangements" in each case and in each situation, and whether by "free" trade or otherwise, strictly in accordance with their own interests. They may or may not arrange at first, and in some cases, "to further enjoyment of access, on equal terms, to the trade of the world"—subject to other terms: they or rising and rival forces may or may not arrange, later on and as the situation changes, to give freedom here or build up barriers there: but whatever they do nothing can prevent the various capitalist groups playing each for its own hand, and so eventually clashing.

This is already recognised by the ominous words with which Clause Four is introduced: "with due respect for their existing obligations." One of these obligations is Ottawa. "By the imposition of a complete tariff in Britain in 1932," writes Mr. Palme Dutt, "and by the Ottawa agreements of the same year endeavouring to draw a fence round the Empire, the last remains of free trade vanished from the earth."* Yet existing obligations are to be respected. Clause Four becomes nonsense before the ink of its preamble is dry.

Realities break through appearances and aspirations in Clause Seven also. Is it less important that all Europeans should traverse Europe without hindrance than that all men should so traverse the high seas and oceans? On the contrary, anyone who gives a moment's thought to the matter, in the light of the last

forty years of European history, realises immediately that the unification, without restriction on any and under a supra-national authority, of all European means of transport and exchange is a vital condition for peace and prosperity. But the Charter mentions only the freedom of the seas. Why? Because Britain and America are maritime powers: because the first necessity, from their point of view, is that there shall be no possibility of challenge to their own free use of the seas and oceans.

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But surely, it may be said, "access on equal terms to the *raw materials* of the world" promises a great advance? For we have been told again and again, and also in this book, that the grab for colonies and "spheres of influence," as sources of raw materials, is one of the major causes of twentieth-century wars. Doesn't this part of Clause Four solve the colonial problem at a stroke?

No.

The question may be asked in reply: if nothing but access to raw materials were involved in the possession of colonies and spheres of influence, and if it were really desired to put all traders on terms of equality so far as these raw materials are concerned, then why is there no supplementary provision for an "endeavour" to redistribute colonies on a more even basis? This is not a debating question: the answer to it is crucial for an understanding of Imperialism. The fact is that, even if it were not certain that in this matter also the dominant groups would in every given situation act in accordance with their own interests, "access on equal terms to the raw materials of the world" would not be a first step towards the solution of the colonial problem.

Why, in the period of Imperialism, do the capitalist interests desperately *want* colonies and spheres of influence? It was not always so: in a phase of free industrial capitalism we regarded them as a bit of a nuisance. But nowadays the mere suggestion of ceding territory arouses a storm of indignation: unless, as when redistribution was tentatively discussed during the appeasement period, the smaller sacrifice is accepted to avoid the greater. There must be some very solid reason for this tenacity.

The physical and sovereign possession of colonies, and the political control of spheres of influence, offer enormous advantages in the epoch of monopoly and of the export of capital. Take this narrower question of raw materials. The capitalists of the possessing country are able, by compelling the natives to work at sweated rates, to produce the raw material very cheap: they are then able, by building up a monopoly trust in control of the raw material produced, to sell it very dear. The resulting super-

profits are among the greatest of our time. Equal access of country A and country B to raw material means equal access at the price demanded by the trust : but there is no equal access to the profit represented by the difference between cost of production and cost of sale. Country A gets the whole of this : and country B will scheme and intrigue and combine with others and finally fight tooth and nail for so glittering a prize

Moreover, the mere possession of these resources, however freely they may be distributed, means power for the possessor : it means that a trump card is always up his sleeve in the event of war. And this cannot be tolerated, for it is only by war, or the threat of it, that the prize itself can ultimately be obtained.

This is not the end. Quite apart from raw materials, the nationals of a Power in sovereign possession or political control of an area are in an overwhelmingly superior position, whatever the formal arrangements, for establishing banks, developing trade, "opening up the country," and generally exploiting its human and material resources. And always for their own profit.

II

THE SOCIAL CLAUSES

Let us turn to a brief consideration of those provisions in the Charter which directly concern the welfare of the common people. They are to be found in the whole of Clause V, and in the last word of Clause VI. The desire is that the nations should collaborate to improve labour standards, to raise wages (this is presumably what is meant by "economic advancement"), to abolish unemployment ("social security"), and to put an end to poverty ("freedom from want") throughout the world.

That these are sincere desires of the Prime Minister and the President is not for a moment in question : passionately sincere in the case of Mr. Roosevelt, who has devoted the most fruitful years of his life to an attempt, by means of the New Deal, to secure these objectives in the United States. But they are trying to do something that is flatly impossible of achievement so long as they leave something else undone : just as surely as, in the other matter of peace and when he created the League of Nations, another great American, President Wilson, attempted to do the same.

No argument should be necessary to show that these aspirations, valuable though even the voicing of them is in a world threatened by the fascists, are incapable of realisation under international capitalism. Look at the question of poverty in the broadest

possible way. What does capitalism mean? Production for maximum personal gain: buying as cheap as possible, and selling as dear. Among the things to be bought at the lowest rate is human labour. How conceivably can you make the minimising of poverty a primary aim, if your whole way of life compels you, often in your own despite, to maximise it? An overwhelming majority of the world's inhabitants live a low and brutish life, devoid of hope or happiness. The task of raising their standards is so gigantic that nothing but an utterly single-minded devotion to it can succeed: nothing but planning on a world scale, with, as the inspiring motive, a ceaseless concern for the general good. Even apart from the necessities of competition, and these are pivotal, how can capitalism—not this or that exceptional capitalist, but capitalism in general—how can capitalism give its whole mind and heart to a quest forbidden by the law of its own being? There is only one way in which the nations can collaborate to abolish poverty and want: by ceasing to be capitalist, by becoming socialist.

Or take security—the abolition of unemployment. Not all the care and thought, not daily collaboration between the nations—even if, during prosperity, they had not had something else to think about—could have prevented, under finance capitalism, the slump of 1929. At the height of it, forty millions of human beings were thrown on the scrap-heap: but this epidemic of mass unemployment was merely a special aspect and aggravated phase of a disease which had been becoming endemic since the beginning of the twentieth century. The cause is neither complicated nor obscure. Because, again by the law of their being, capitalists must pay the minimum possible both to the primary producers and to the industrial workers, they begin to accumulate, out of past transactions, vast masses of capital. If they were then able to say, for instance, "There are a million people in the world—some of them here, some of them in China or Peru—who are without a very necessary or desirable commodity, say boots or clothes or bread or houses. I won't think about profit any more. I will use my accumulation to buy leather, and put up a factory, and pay shoemakers: and when I've made a million pairs of shoes, I'll give them to the barefooted, provided only that they are doing some useful work. Of course, I'll keep back a few pairs, for I must sell them to provide myself with reasonable comfort: but I'll retain no more than are strictly necessary for this purpose"—if capitalists were able to say this, then all would be well. But they cannot say it, for they are capitalists.

No, they must try to make still bigger profits: and because when things are going well we are all sanguine and optimistic,

they produce as many commodities as possible for sale at the maximum price, and build new factories for the subsequent production of more. Meanwhile, they continue to pay producers and the industrial workers as little as possible. And at last the bubble bursts, because the people haven't enough money to absorb the goods produced: there are a million pairs of surplus shoes which the million shoeless cannot buy. So comes a catastrophic fall in world prices, and mass unemployment: not to mention the deliberate burning of the shoes in an effort to arrest the fall and "save the market."

Trustification makes the final outcome all the more certain. By limiting, to an increasing degree and within its own domain, national and even international competition, it is able to "rationalise"; less labour is employed, and the gap between the volume of goods and the public purchasing power increases. Or, to take one of many variations, for certain kinds of trusts a point arrives at which it pays them better to produce not more goods but the same number or fewer. But this does not help matters; for they maintain the price but employ less labour: or, while still employing less labour, they so raise the price (as the lessening of competition enables them to do) that the aggregate price of all the fewer products is higher than the old aggregate price of the more numerous: and so on. The end is the same.

It is worth while to repeat that this diminution of competition means, not a lessening of the drive to war, but its extreme intensification. Competition between innumerable firms becomes competition between giant rival trusts; and within these trusts the national groups, or combinations of them, are always jockeying for position, with a view to enlarging the share of the market allotted to them by the previous agreement.

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At the end of the war, there will be after the initial chaos, a reconstruction boom: and if monopoly capitalism has its way the boom will be followed by a slump as inevitably as 1924 was followed by 1929. And similarly any free trade period, any period of "access, on equal terms, to the trade and to the raw materials of the world" (for a general tendency in that direction, subject to necessary exceptions, rivalries, cross-currents, and "existing obligations," may well be in the interest of the dominant capitalist groups) will be followed by a return to economic nationalism, which will itself be the symptom of the drive to another war.

III

THE POLITICAL CLAUSES

In economic and social matters the aspirations of the Charter are progressive, and the only criticism that can be brought against them is that they are incapable of realisation without more radical change. But the most important of the political provisions is dangerously reactionary, though of course progressive to an extreme degree in comparison with Nazi aspirations.

We can all heartily agree with "no aggrandisement, territorial or other," and can only trust that this promise will be fulfilled in the spirit as well as in the letter. Equally welcome is the "desire to see no territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned" and the respect for "the right of all peoples to choose the form of Government under which they will live," and nothing is necessary—though it is very necessary—except to underline the word "peoples" in both sentences. But the second half of Clause III—"they wish to see *sovereign rights* [my italics] and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them"—that is in a different category.

The shape of the glad new world is now beginning to emerge with horrifying clarity. If in economics it is to be back to 1924, in politics it is to be back to 1914. There is no trace of any realisation in the Charter that there is something radically wrong with a world in which innumerable sovereign States, each with its own armed forces, bargain, bribe, threaten, kowtow, combine, double-cross, and generally play that wretched game of power politics which is the political equivalent of the economic rivalry already considered in this book. Compared with the Eight Points of the Charter, the Wilsonian plan was wildly progressive: for the project of a League of Nations, though it failed and was bound to fail in an imperialist world, did show an understanding that somehow the anarchy of competing sovereignties must be reduced to order. Because the League failed, presumably all such attempts are now to be abandoned: for no one can take very seriously the casual "pending the establishment of a wider and permanent system of general security" of Clause Eight. What the Charter really proposes is to allow both the old economic and the old political anarchy to continue, and to rely for peace in such a world—for the Charter was drafted at a time when the complete collapse of the Soviet Union was considered to be all but inevitable—on the overwhelming superiority of the Anglo-American armed forces.

Consider only Europe. Sovereign rights are to be restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them. That means a sovereign France, a sovereign Belgium, a sovereign Luxemburg, a sovereign Holland, a sovereign Norway, a sovereign Denmark, a sovereign Poland, a sovereign Czechoslovakia, a sovereign Yugoslavia, and a sovereign Greece: all with the old stupid frontiers or with such modifications of them as can be wrung from the Peace Conference, and all only too ready to begin anew the secular game of rivalry and intrigue. And it means in reality something worse even than that: it means putting in control of these sovereign States, in many cases, the various reactionary elements which comprise or dominate their emigré governments in London. Capitalists, financiers, militarists, and men who, if not fascists, are certainly of fascist mind: these are to be set down, when the fighting is over, on the sovereign and independent squares of the European chessboard. It is considered impolite to criticise an ally: but what is at stake is the happiness of hundreds of millions unborn, and politeness must take a second place. What warrant can there be for believing that the new Metaxas will be different from the old, or that the old Dutch bankers will not be old Dutch bankers still?

The Europe of 1939 was a meaningless *result*, not an organisation of peoples corresponding to contemporary needs. The various forces that had operated from the beginning of a long history—feudal hunger for land, religious strife, dynastic ambitions, the accidental situation of a coal or iron mine, the relative abilities and opportunities of military leaders, geographical peculiarities, the special value of some small country at some particular moment to a more powerful one, the rise and development of modern industrialism and the nationalist sentiment that accompanied it—these and many other forces had made the map of Europe what it was when Hitler set out to remake it. Some may reply that nevertheless Europe was evolving in a natural direction, a direction dictated by the strongest of all forces—national or perhaps racial sentiment: and that it is to this sentiment that, in a very rough and ready way, the Europe of national sovereign States corresponded. It would be foolish to deny either the value or the importance of national sentiment: nevertheless the objection is without validity. Does anybody think of Switzerland, with its Italians and Germans and French, as less “natural” than Italy or Germany or France? If anybody does, it can only be because Switzerland has learned to live at peace, and the others have not. Again, if Norway and Sweden had not parted company, should we not have thought of the union of Norway and Sweden as geographically “natural”?

Of course we should. It is unnecessary to labour the point : example after example will come to the reader's mind.

The Europe of 1939, then, had resulted from the varied interplay of many historical forces. What was her contemporary need ? Above all, political and social unification—a unification in politics and society corresponding to the unification in economics to which modern large-scale production and increasingly rapid communications were constantly driving.

To understand what was happening, make an artificial separation of the two elements in monopoly capitalism—its large-scale production and rapidity of communications on the one hand, and its competition for profits on the other. The large-scale production and rapidity of communications were driving (if for convenience we may isolate Europe) to European economic unification : but this was impossible without the political and social unification which a multiplicity of sovereign States impeded. Simultaneously the other element in monopoly capitalism—the competition for profits—was, not driving to economic unification, but rather creating an economic map of Europe which bore little relation to the political map, which cut across national frontiers, and which could have no stability—not even the very imperfect stability that at best was possible—unless the political map were modified accordingly. There were thus three anarchical competitions : the competition between the constituent parts of the old political map, the competition between the constituent parts of the new economic map, and the competition between the old map and the new. And there was a fourth source of anarchy : the fact that “ politicals ” were also “ economists,” that capitalists were also nationals.

There is only one solution. Retain—you cannot help yourself, anyhow—large-scale production and rapidity of communications, which are the midwives of unity : cut out both political sovereignty and competition for profits, by which the unity is aborted.

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By way of illustrating the European problem, take the case of South East Europe. Whom, first, are we to consider : the few idle landlords, and silly noblemen, and anachronistic kings, or the masses of starving peasantry ? If the latter—if we want to see millions of fellow-creatures reasonably happy instead of starving and in despair—a plan is needed. There must be both more intensive cultivation, and, to relieve the pressure on the land, the creation of secondary industries. Both will require capital : but the return will come, not in big profits and not at first in any

profit at all, but in an increase of human happiness and a gradual growth of European prosperity. Again, a stable market must be provided, at good prices, for the agricultural produce, and there must be a careful and planned interchange between this produce and manufactured goods from industrial countries. *The whole problem is a European problem (it is really a world problem, but let that go) and it demands at least a European solution. And a European solution means a European plan.* What conceivable relevance to it have the frontiers of "Yugoslavia," or "Bulgaria" or "Rumania" or "Greece"? What does it matter a tinker's curse to a Greek peasant whether "Greece" is big or small, powerful or weak? He may be bemused, when the propaganda is turned on, by "national glory": he is rightly proud of his cultural heritage and popular tradition (which Metaxas shamefully betrayed),* and would like to preserve it and to live in its spirit: but the *reality* is that he wants to be a man and not a beast of burden. All the rest is words and dope.

What is true of Eastern Europe is true, *mutatis mutandis*, of Europe as a whole. But no European plan is possible either so long as Europe is divided up into a large number of sovereign States, or so long as it is capitalist. For in any area which, under modern conditions, can function successfully only as a single economic unit, atomisation into separate sovereignties must prevent the subordination of the national to the continental interest, and the more so if the sovereign areas and the natural economic ones do not happen to coincide. The better States will be preoccupied with the preservation and defence of existing frontiers, which may have lost all meaning: the worse with their extension. All will think of national glory and prestige. Separate armies will be maintained and increased as a warning or a threat to others: alliances will be sought, by way of still greater strength for attack or defence. If the dominant power in any State happens to be comparatively enlightened, it will care at best for the welfare of its own people, irrespective of the general continental welfare: should tariffs be in the national interest it will impose them, even though they might ruin all the rest. If the dominant power happens to be selfish, it will care for no interest but its own.

As for capitalism, it must seek, alike in its national, its continental, and its world transactions, the maximum profit, and not the general good. It must look to the next few balance sheets, and not to the gradual achievement of a prosperity more widely diffused and a happiness in which at last all may have a share.

* See Bert Birtles' *Exiles in the Aegean* (London, 1938).

The plans at present afoot for some sort of Union between contiguous States (of which the "agreement [presenting] the general foundations for the organisation of the Union" between Yugoslavia and Greece is typical) do not begin to meet the case. Such projects may be in some circumstances to the good and in other circumstances to the bad: but they do not touch the real trouble. There is to be neither abrogation of State sovereignty nor supersession of capitalism: but simply a certain co-ordination of capitalist economy within the area, and the adoption of a common plan for the sovereign armed forces of the States comprising the Union. If the Greek-Yugoslav plan were to succeed, all that would result would be a stronger sovereign Greece-Yugoslavia (on the old economic basis, and with Greece and Yugoslavia still each sovereign within the Union) instead of a weaker sovereign Greece and a weaker sovereign Yugoslavia. To mention only one point, the peasant problem, which depends primarily on relations not between Greece and Yugoslavia but between these and industrial countries, would be little nearer solution. And a rather smaller series of stronger national armies in Europe, instead of a rather larger series of weaker ones, might well in some circumstances increase the danger of war instead of diminishing it.

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The minimum that is required is somewhat as follows. Europe must be organised into at most two or three great federations, with full cultural autonomy and local self-government for the national groupings within these federations. The federations must themselves be federated. There must be a European plan; and to make it effective the greater federation must own at least the great resources of transport and power, must control the broad exchanges, over the whole area, of agricultural produce and manufactured goods, and must have the monopoly of foreign trade. Unless there is to be only a single international army, which is too much to hope, the European army must be in the hands of the greater federation, which must forbid, both to the local groupings and to the smaller federations, any force whatever except such as may be required for strictly police purposes.

This means a socialist Europe; and because a socialist Europe is unthinkable without a socialist Germany, it means a socialist Germany.

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Religion once brought some unification to Europe. Hitler, before the war and by and during his conquests, has been trying

to do the same by a process of enslavement. After Hitler, Europe must be unified by co-operation, which can also be a religion.

IV

THE DISARMAMENT CLAUSE

To save the reader the trouble of turning back, Clause Eight, the disarmament clause, is here reprinted :

EIGHTH, they believe all of the nations of the world, for realistic as well as spiritual reasons, must come to the abandonment of the use of force. Since no future peace can be maintained if land, sea or air armaments continue to be employed by nations which threaten, or may threaten, aggression outside of their frontiers, they believe, pending the establishment of a wider and permanent system of general security, that the disarmament of such nations is essential. They will likewise aid and encourage all other practicable measures which will lighten for peace-loving peoples the crushing burden of armament.

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If Clause Three of the Charter is back to 1914 and the economic Clauses back to 1924, then Clause Eight is back to Versailles. But Versailles with a difference. This time there is to be no League of Nations. The failure of the League has been duly observed : and instead of removing the basic evil—monopoly capitalism combined with state sovereignty—which made its failure inevitable, the Charter proposes just to abandon the experiment. But what has apparently not been observed at all is the failure of German disarmament.

Clause Eight simply proposes the unilateral disarmament of the enemy Powers. That is all. It is clear that "nations which threaten, or may threaten, aggression outside of their frontiers" can only mean the Powers with whom we shall have been at war when the fighting ceases. Even on its own ground, the absurdity of this proposal is manifest. Is it suggested that only the Powers included in that combination "*may* threaten" aggression in the future? Any textbook of history, picked at random from the shelves, refutes such an idea, irrespectively of the analysis of Imperialism and "uneven development" which this book has sought to explain. Take a few examples from the present conflict.

Suppose Italy had not come into the war. The framers of the Charter can hardly consider this an absurd supposition, since we "appeased" her, in an attempt to keep her out, up to the very moment of her entry. And suppose Japan had not come in. The same consideration applies: if Britain and the United States had been quite certain that she would become an active partner of Germany, the United States at least would not have been so completely unprepared. But if they had kept out, would they have been any the less potential aggressors? Of course not: but far from being disarmed at the Peace Conference, they would presumably have had a share in the job of "holding down" Germany.

If the reader considers these cases too hypothetical, then take Spain. She is out of the war: it is conceivable that she will remain out. We have never ceased to "appease" her (by "her" I mean, of course, the wretched complex of forces round Franco, not the great Spanish people). Franco is certainly a potential aggressor. Are we to disarm him if it suits him to come in to the present war, but to make him one of the policemen if he doesn't? Or does any sane man think that, as circumstances alter and the balance of forces shifts in a changing world, Hungary and Rumania will always be potential aggressors but Yugoslavia and Greece never? Or is it perhaps contemplated to disarm Germany but not Hungary? And what of Bulgaria? Her potential future aggressiveness, for the purposes of Clause Eight, will presumably depend on just how, in the present situation, it suits her present rulers to jump. This whole way of looking at potential aggression is the extreme of childish frivolity, and to base your policy on it is simply to play with the lives of millions.

The Times newspaper (to the sanity of which, nowadays, it is a pleasure to pay tribute) is uneasily aware of this absurdity and clutches for comfort at the words "may threaten aggression." "The dangerous temptation," it writes in a leading article of January 6th 1942, "to suppose that the problem is permanently disposed of by the mere elimination of German military power receives no encouragement from the Atlantic Charter, which speaks in the broadest terms of the use of armaments 'by nations which threaten, or may threaten, aggression.' The positive end of peaceful well-being will not be attained by a simple act of suppression." No; but *The Times* knows very well that this is precisely what the Charter proposes. By nations that "may threaten aggression" the Charter does not mean nations other than the enemy nations: it means specifically the enemy nations (and of course primarily Germany) which are conceived of as nations that always "may threaten" aggression, even if at any

time they do not actually threaten it. What else can the words conceivably mean? Does *The Times* imagine Mr. Churchill saying to one of our Allies at the close of the war "You look like a potential aggressor: we're going to disarm you": or, say, to Italy "Now that the flop Mussolini has gone you're a pretty mild lot: here are some arms"?

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Versailles at any rate made an attempt, through the foundation of the League, to restrain aggression from whatever quarter, in a changing world, it might at any time arise. The Charter makes no such attempt. It couples with the disarmament of the enemy Powers nothing but the vague "wider and permanent system of general security" which is to "pend." That is all that statesmanship, with the history of 1914 to 1941 in mind, can offer.

Read in conjunction with the rest of the Charter, Clause Eight means something very simple. Europe is to be dominated, as benevolently as possible, by Anglo-American capitalism, and the peace is to be kept, and in particular Germany to be compelled permanently to acquiesce in that situation, by disarming Germany and concentrating overwhelming military force in the hands of the victors.

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That such a plan cannot conceivably of itself do anything to prevent, even if it can postpone, another great international war will be clear to the reader who has accepted the fundamental argument of this book. There is one solution, and one only. Cut out monopoly capitalism. But the abolition of capitalism, while it will at a stroke substitute a drive to peace for a drive to war, will not make war impossible. The mere mechanics of socialism, as contrasted with those of capitalism, will make war improbable instead of all but inevitable; and the ethical impulse of socialism will do much to "change human nature," to increase the spontaneity of co-operation and reduce the spontaneity of aggression. But, because we, all of us, *are* aggressors, something more will be required. Armaments will have to be not merely nationalised—that is already involved in the abolition of capitalism—but internationalised; and the sovereign right of States to make war must be abandoned, and in its place an international police force, controlled by a supra-national authority on which all peoples are represented, must be ready to nip in the bud any attempt at aggression from whatever quarter it may come. There lies the hope of permanent peace; nowhere else.

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If the reader is persuaded of this—if he feels that it is for such a plan that he must work, and not for the kind of "solution" which finds its frankest expression in Dr. Einzig's pages—I am fully content. But we ought to carry the enquiry a stage further: we ought to consider what we should be working for, in the specific matter of German armaments, in each one of the three major post war eventualities which were discussed in Chapter X. Very broadly these are, it was suggested, (1) a Europe incorporated in the Soviet Union; (2) a federal socialist Europe, working out its own destiny; (3) a Europe somewhat on the model (for the time being) of 1924 to 1929. Let us consider them in that order.

(1) There is no point in discussing what should be done if the war ends with Europe effectively in Soviet-Russian control. As Germany would be more or less a constituent part of the Soviet Union, the aspirations of the Charter, so far as German disarmament is concerned, would become at once devoid of reality.

(2) If the European revolution can be brought into being and made effective, so that a federal socialist Europe results, then also Clause Eight becomes meaningless and necessarily inoperative. It will be the task of the revolutionaries to destroy the power of their armament magnates and militarists utterly and once for all, and to deprive them not only of their weapons but of the possibility ever again either of making or of using them. To help them in that task is the greatest service we can render to Europe and the world; but to disarm the revolutionaries would be to break the revolution, and such a course could be pursued only by victors who wished either to set up more or less respectable counter-revolutionary Governments as their puppets, or to dominate the country themselves—which again and even in the quite short run would mean collaboration with these same counter-revolutionary puppets. The trouble is that some of the puppets would sooner or later become independent giants, who would challenge their masters.

If to disarm the revolutionaries at the outset would mean to break the revolution, to disarm them subsequently would mean to attack the revolution by a war of intervention. In the event of a revolution, therefore, Clause Eight would be inoperative: and its presence in the Charter means, of course, that a revolution is neither contemplated nor desired. For a socialist Europe, as the next step to peace, is the *alternative* to the Charter's plan for preserving peace by "holding down" Germany.

(3) But what if the project which lies behind the Atlantic Charter "comes off"? What if there is no socialist revolution in

Germany and Europe in general? What if, instead, there is a respectable conservative government in Germany, governments with varying degrees and kinds of capitalist reaction in most other European countries, a network of sovereign States on the old model, and the whole dominated by and dependent on Anglo-American capitalism? What then?

If that happens, a situation may well arise in which the progressive forces here, while continuing and intensifying the struggle for socialism at home and abroad, may have to *insist* meantime on the most drastic control of post-war Germany. To disarm her utterly, and to see to it by every conceivable political, diplomatic and military device that she cannot take even the first faltering step towards what might look like the most innocuous rearmament—that may have to be our policy. Once again we may have to wage a ceaseless struggle against what may be the new appeasement. We may have to do this, and meanwhile hope and pray either that socialism may still come and transform everything, or that, if it does not come, somehow the inevitable may not happen, somehow Germany may be permanently “held down.” *But hope and work as we may, unless socialism at some point intervenes the inevitable will nevertheless happen.*

It will happen because, while gradually and with the help of systems and institutions designed for that end you can to some extent “change human nature,” you cannot change the *result* of not merely permitting but insisting that greed and self-interest should motivate the whole productive system, which means the ordinary actions of most people’s workaday lives. It will happen because the given forces in Germany will obey the law of their being, forces outside Germany will do the same, and the interaction of the two will produce its own unavoidable result.

Will a bank or a steel combine or an armaments trust behave any differently, in 1945 and 1950 and 1960, from the way it behaved in 1900 and 1913 and 1919 and 1924 and 1933? *Can* it? It can judge, no doubt, that on some particular occasion in the past it acted in a manner which turned out to be opposed to its own interest: but being a bank or a steel combine or an armaments trust, which has no other meaning or purpose save to make the maximum profit, it must in every changing situation do what it precisely was created to do—seek that profit and ensue it. Will the Thyssens be any less Thyssens because they have quarrelled with Hitler? Will Standard Oil, remembering 1939 to 194–, lie down with Royal Dutch? Will Messrs. Pierpont Morgan decide that it’s all a rather nasty business, and devote themselves wholeheartedly to raising the standard of living of, say, the African

"natives"? They will not because they cannot, without ceasing altogether to be Thyssens and Morgans and the rest. And what is true of the great trusts and combines that dominate the modern scene is true also of those other forces of national pride and "prestige" and desire for security and so on which in the twentieth century operate within the setting of the monopoly and finance which carry on the daily business of the world.

We have seen that hardly had the cries of "Hang the Kaiser!" and "Make Germany pay!" died down before it was France that we began to fear and her that we set about restraining: for everything had changed and, Germany crushed, it was now Poincaré who wanted to dominate Europe and upset the "balance of power." We have seen, also, how from 1924 onwards Germany was thought of as a profitable field for British and French and above all American investment. And we have seen how, finally, Hitler was welcomed as a bulwark against Bolshevism, and support was given to him from a large variety of motives both by the "interests" and by a Government that was little other than those "interests" in a different form. To imagine that it won't happen again if Europe remains capitalist—not of course with the same details, nor necessarily (but quite probably) with Germany as the country to be "built up": it might be France or Austria or Poland*—is to be like the man who, having sinned against his conscience and suffered remorse, vows in the utmost sincerity that he will never, in that way at least, sin again, and is quite certain that he will carry out the vow. He forgets that, when the temptation recurs, the circumstances will seem quite different. And he, after all, has done something which he believes to be wrong: whereas capitalists who seek profits and statesmen who are, in the bad and narrow

* It may well be Poland. Among many other indications, there was a remarkable interview in *The Sunday Times* of January 11th 1942 with Count Edward Raczyński, Foreign Minister in the Polish Government. I am precluded by a copyright notice from quoting from it, as I should like to do; but, briefly, the Count sees his own country as the focal point for a "centre of power" to maintain "the European balance of power" (sickeningly ominous words). The new Poland, in alliance with Czechoslovakia, is to become "a centre of attraction" for other nations, north and south. The Allies are "to raise her economic potential," and Great Britain is to be directly and closely "concerned" in her economic activities.

I write without hostility to Poland. Her pre-war regime was one of the rottenest in history: but I am told by those who know that her socialist movement is magnificent. I hope it will win out, and will resist the temptation to be, in the bad and narrow sense, "nationalist."

At the foot of the interview there is a note, "Next week: Dr. Gerbrandy, the Prime Minister of Holland": and many others are to follow. It is to be expected that, *mutatis mutandis*, these interviews will display a certain similarity.

sense, "patriotic" and soldiers who rely on war are doing what they regard as natural, proper and obvious. Do you imagine that, at this very moment, the Federation of British Industries thinks that there was anything *wrong* in the Düsseldorf agreement: in the plan to combine with the Nazis to exploit the world? For them it was just a bad bet: next time, with some other combination, it might come off. Nor am I blaming them; as was said in the first Chapter that is how we all at present live.

There is indeed no limit to what a man will do, with an air of perfect naturalness, when, before the circumstances had changed, the mere possibility of any such action would have been thought ridiculous. Mr. Winston Churchill, who once said that "Communism rots the soul of a nation" and who has been described as "the man who would have turned loose the German armies after the last war to settle the account of civilisation with the Red Peril," now collaborates with Stalin not only in harmony but with genuine admiration.

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If the smallest remnant of power is left in the hands of the German heavy industrialists, or junkers, or old officer class, or Nazi hierarchy—and nothing but the German revolution can completely destroy this power—they will begin intriguing, with as much cunning as determination, to recover their old position, just as would, in similar circumstances, their opposite numbers in any other country. The industrialists will be playing for their share of super-profits, the militarists for a war of revenge. That is why, in this eventuality, the progressive forces everywhere will have to be on the look-out for the first remote sign of any approach to recovery. If there is no German revolution, a permanent army of occupation or control commission to prevent rearmament would be far more in the interests of the Germans as well as of all other peoples than the certainty of a war for exploitation and revenge.

But no plans for a permanent army of occupation, or for a permanent control commission, could in the end have more than the remotest chance of success. For if the old elements are in the background—and they must be if there is no German revolution—first, what precautions can effectively prevent the beginning of rearmament, and secondly what guarantee can there be that, as new rivals emerge, finance and monopoly in Britain or America will not desire to arm the old enemy against the new? What can prevent a recurrence, first of 1919 to 1933 and then of 1933 to 1939? Remember what occurred during these two stages:

(i) In a recent speech, Mr. Churchill said that Germany had been preparing for a war of aggression for the best part of twenty years. This is certainly untrue in the sense intended by Mr. Churchill: it is, indeed, a typical piece of war-time propaganda. Mr. Philip Noel-Baker, who was Personal Assistant to the President of the Disarmament Conference from 1932 to 1933, and is probably the greatest living authority on the subject, states that "it was no diplomatic courtesy, but a statement of accomplished fact, when Marshal Foch on behalf of the Allies declared the disarmament of Germany to be 'effective' in 1927."* Moreover, as we have already seen,† the German *people* certainly did not desire to rearm, *provided that their disarmament should not remain unilateral*.

The fact is that, while the militarist and industrialist expansionism was all the time thrusting from the background—because the sources of it had not been effectively destroyed, because, that is to say, there had not been in the fundamental meaning of the words that socialist revolution which, as D'Abernon's Diary so clearly shows, was the last thing the Allies desired--the Weimar Republic was pacific in the sense in which British capitalism during this period was pacific: both desired peace, but neither, in the conditions of monopoly capitalism, could prevent the drive to war. In spite of all this, numerous breaches of the Versailles disarmament clauses occurred from the very early post-war years, and many of them long before Hitler came to power: and at a time when the British Government was presumably still anxious that the disarmament clauses should be observed. "For the most part," says Mr. Noel-Baker, "these violations were committed by private German Armament Firms, but in some of them the Government, or at least the War Department, were either actively or passively involved." Among the examples given by Mr. Noel-Baker are the activities of German secret military and naval agents in Spain, Turkey and Sweden, including the employment of naval officers in the submarine shipyards of Vigo and work connected with military aeroplanes in Sweden: an advertisement by Dr. Stolzenberg, head of the Hamburg works at which a famous gas explosion subsequently occurred, offering "to build, finance, and manage chemical works under financial guarantee with the co-operation of specialists and engineers": the erection on the banks of the Amsterdam-North Sea canal of an explosives factory by the German Phoenix Company, after it had established relations with and secured control of a Dutch company: Krupps' acquisition of virtual mastery

* *Op. cit.*, p. 521.

† See p. 52.

over the great Bofors works in Sweden, when Versailles had compelled them to abandon the manufacture of war material in Germany: and the establishment of the Soleure Munitions factory in Switzerland, under the control of a concern at Düsseldorf. Of the latter, Mr. Noel-Baker quotes the following from a Swiss Report:

"The Soleure arms factory is a typical product of the internationalism of those who exploit the 'armed peace': foreign capital, foreign directors, masked behind Swiss names, and equivocal combinations which fill the whole country with distrust, indignation and anger. . . ."

That sentence reveals the reality which, if it remains a reality must make it all but impossible effectively to disarm a Germany in which any capitalist elements survive, and even if the occupying or controlling Power permanently desires to disarm it. *For it is the old Europe that the Charter thinks of restoring.* It does not propose to dismantle the armament factories of Holland or Sweden or Czechoslovakia (whose Skoda works, controlled before Hitler by Schneider-Creusot of Paris, were one of the greatest menaces to international peace): nor does it suggest that, if such a thing were possible under monopoly capitalism, the links which bind the various armament firms into great international trusts should be broken. What then can prevent, once again, under-cover arrangements between the non-German magnates and their German opposite numbers, if this happens to suit the book of both? Patriotism? No: for if it is untrue of the proletariat that it has no fatherland, this is certainly true of the armaments industry. Nor is it likely that any German Government that was being "held down" would, if it knew of any covert rearmament, report it to the occupying or controlling authority; on the contrary it would do all in its power to encourage and foster it. Finally, remember that the British and American armament firms, closely linked with their governments, are vitally interested in the international traffic.

(ii) But what happened from 1919 to 1933 is far less important than what happened from 1933 to 1939. It is worth quoting again the remark of Sir Herbert Lawrence, Chairman of Vickers, at the Annual General Meeting of shareholders in 1934, after Hitler had come to power. He was asked, it will be remembered, whether his firm was assisting German rearmament, and he replied:

"I cannot give you an assurance in definite terms, but I can tell you that nothing is done without the sanction and approval of our own Government."

It was now no longer a question of German armament firms evading Versailles, sometimes with the approval, tacit or otherwise, of their Government : it was a question of British armament firms, with the approval of *theirs*, actively and in spite of Versailles rearming the late enemy. Is it inconceivable or even wildly improbable or even improbable at all that, given twentieth-century Imperialism, history might repeat itself? If you think so, cast your mind back to Armistice night in November 1918, and imagine what you would have thought then if anyone had prophesied just what would be said at a Vickers meeting no more than sixteen years later.

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It may or may not be Germany which a whole complex of forces, internal and external, will once again bring on to the scene as a bloody aggressor. History is full of the fall of one Power and the rise of another. But given (1) a patchwork of sovereign States in Europe, (2) great capitalist monopolies within, and cutting across, the borders of these States, (3) similar trusts and combines in Britain and America, competing with, allying themselves to, and seeking support from or against this or that European group or shifting combination of groups—then sooner or later some country will be “built up,” armaments and all, and the stage will be set for a new war. Whether it is Germany or some other State that will be the next aggressor is irrelevant : the only thing that matters is to create conditions that predispose to peace and not to war.

V

THE PRIVATE MANUFACTURE OF ARMAMENTS—A MODEL OF CAPITALISM

Something has already been said in these pages about the private manufacture of armaments and the international armaments trusts. It may be useful to conclude by giving, in haphazard and catalogue form, a few facts about them, taken at random from the immense mass of material available. Two purposes will be served. The reader will see, if he has not already seen, that given the continuance of these trusts and apart from all other considerations, the unilateral disarmament of the at present aggressor nations could offer no solution, even if the continued existence of these trusts, and of capitalism in general, did not itself mean that in practice such disarmament would not be carried out. But the reader will also see something else.

For the operations of armaments trusts are merely a special case of the operations of capitalist trusts and combines in general. Armament kings—to say nothing of the hundreds of thousands of shareholders in armament firms—are not specially wicked men : they are merely capitalists in a particular line of business. Their ethics are the ethics of the whole capitalist community : and if they horrify us as private profit-making in general does not, that is merely because, with our lack of imagination, the direct production of death and torment in their most agonising forms for the purpose of personal enrichment seems worse than the pursuit of personal enrichment without thought or care for the death and misery that may result. The important point to bear in mind, when reading what follows, is that *capitalism sticks at nothing, and can stick at nothing, in its search for profits*. The essential fact about these men is not that they are armament kings but that they are capitalists : they would act with precisely the same motive and in precisely the same manner if they dealt in wool or wheat or margarine instead of in the instruments of death.* To understand how capitalism operates when it happens to be armaments-capitalism is to understand why capitalism as such is incompatible with the pursuit either of the general good or of peace.

There are two other reasons why a little detail about armament trusts will be useful. First, it enables us to see with particular clarity that capitalism demands behaviour directly opposed to the ethical standards which all of us, including capitalists, have slowly learned to attempt in our private relations. If A and B are living peacefully together, and C, for some personal advantage, sets about persuading each in turn that the other is plotting to murder him, with the result that they fight and A is killed and B blinded, we do not think very well of C, knowing that he has broken the sixth, eighth, ninth, and tenth Commandments in a particularly despicable manner. But when Sir Basil Zaharoff does literally and precisely that—only A and B happen to be not individuals but millions of men and women and little children—we make him a Knight Grand Cross of the British Empire and give him the ribbon of the Legion of Honour. Secondly, to abolish

* Noel-Baker quotes the following dialogue from the Nye report. Mr. Carse, of the Electric Boat Company, was explaining the nature of a contract which he had made with Vickers' subsidiary in Spain :

Mr. Carse : " You have to get down to practical matters."

Senator Clark : " This is a very practical matter, is it not, Mr. Carse ? "

Mr. Carse : " Like any other business It is not any different from any other business, Senator."

the private manufacture of armaments means in effect to abolish capitalism ; for iron and steel and " finance " are the very basis of modern monopoly capitalism in general and of the armaments industry in particular.

Here, then, are some odds and ends.*

* * * * *

A Sub-Committee of the Temporary Mixed Commission of the League of Nations, sitting in 1921, listed the following as objections to the " untrammelled private manufacture " of armaments :

" (1) That armaments firms have been active in fomenting war scares and in persuading their own countries to adopt warlike policies and to increase their armaments.

" (2) That armament firms have attempted to bribe government officials both at home and abroad.

" (3) That armament firms have disseminated false reports concerning the military and naval programmes of various countries in order to stimulate armament expenditure.

" (4) That armament firms have sought to influence public opinion through the control of newspapers in their own and foreign countries.

" (5) That armament firms have organised international armament rings through which the armaments race has been accentuated by playing off one country against another.

" (6) That armament firms have organised international armament trusts which have increased the price of armaments sold to governments."

* * * * *

Krupp, a German, told the Prussian Minister of War that he could do nothing contrary either to honour or to patriotism, at the moment when he was supplying Austria with the munitions she was to use against Prussia in 1866.

* * * * *

" The use by the Allies of the German patent fuses for hand grenades was revealed in a legal action brought by Krupp against Vickers after the war [of 1914-1918]. Krupp sued Vickers for 1s.

* With one exception, all the passages quoted are, when the reference is not given in the text, from Fenner Brockway's *The Bloody Traffic* (London, 1933), from which book also the non-quoted particulars are paraphrased. A bigger work of reference is Noel-Baker's 500-page *Private Manufacture of Armaments*, which is indispensable for an understanding of the anatomy of capitalism.

per fuse used. The amount claimed was £6,150,000, which means that 123,000,000 fuses of the German type were used against the soldiers of Germany and her allies. A compromise was reached, under which Krupp was given a large interest in the British-owned Miers Steel and Rolling Mills in Spain.

"It is difficult to characterise the callousness of these proceedings. Hundreds of thousands of German boys and men must have been done to death by these 120,000,000 fuses, each duly marked Kpz 96/04 to indicate that the patent was the property of Krupp. Yet Krupp dared to claim royalties upon them! A pound of flesh upon each grenade which scattered in bloody bits the flesh and bones of German boys and men."

* * * * *

"Vickers" said Mr. Hugh Dalton in the House of Commons in 1926 "had been supplying [just before the war] the Turkish artillery with shells which were fired into the Australian, New Zealand, and British troops as they were scrambling up Anzac Cove and Cape Helles. Did it matter to the directors of these armament firms, so long as they did business and expanded the defence expenditure of Turkey, that their weapons mashed up into bloody pulp all the morning glory that was the flower of Anzac—the youth of Australia and New Zealand and our own country?"

* * * * *

The Nobel Dynamite Trust Company was registered before the war of 1914-1918 as a British Company. But it was connected with four German firms, and was a section of the International Cartel of Powder Manufacturers, which represented firms in Britain, Germany, France, and Russia. Its German and British partnership was dissolved only in May 1915 as follows:*

* Even hatred in the present war does not blast finance as completely as it blasts life. *The New Leader* of January 17th 1942 points out that in 1937 the Unilever group was split into British and Dutch companies to escape double taxation. It was agreed that if one company were unable to pay the full preference dividend, the other would make it up, and that the ordinary dividend should be of the same value, reckoned at 12 florins to the pound. Accordingly, for the year 1940, when the British concern paid £660,000 on its ordinary shares, it set aside £700,000 to pay an equal dividend for the Dutch shareholders after the war. It also placed a further £700,000 to reserve to pay the Dutch preference shareholders. But, says *The Daily Telegraph* of December 11th 1941, "The directors of Lever Bros. and Unilever announce that the German Commissioner for the Company's Dutch Associate, Lever Bros. and Unilever N.V., has ordered the payment of full dividends on the Dutch Co.'s 5, 6 and 7 per cent. Preference shares." As a result "A sum of £1,227,653

"The method by which this dissolution of partnership took place is significant. Despite the proclamations which were issued for the confiscation of enemy property during the war, the Nobel Dynamite Trust Company succeeded in obtaining passports for its British and German agents to meet to arrange for the exchange of shares. Advertisements were published in the Press of both countries in May 1915, announcing an exchange of shares between the British and German sections of the trust, and the announcement was introduced by the statement that it was made 'with the consent of the two Governments.' The shareholders were assured that 'ordinary shares of the Nobel Dynamite Co., Ltd., held in Germany, will be accepted in exchange for the same class of shares in the Dynamite Aktien Gesellschaft (formerly the Alfred Nobel Co., of Hamburg)' and vice versa. By this means, British shareholders in the German Company, which was producing explosives to shatter British soldiers to bits, were protected against a loss of their interest and dividends."

* * * * *

In February 1933 the French Government protested against the secret purchase of arms by Hungary in violation of the Peace Treaty. But as the result of an allegation made in the Chamber of Deputies in 1931 an official enquiry revealed the following facts :

"The Hungarian Government originally obtained a loan from Schneider-Creusot, the French armament firm. When Schneider-Creusot asked to be repaid, the Hungarians could not produce the money. Thereupon the French Government secretly lent the Hungarian Government the amount necessary! This loan was transmitted to Hungary, not by the Bank of France, but by the Union Parisienne Banque, in which Schneider-Creusot holds a controlling interest."

* * * * *

Hitler's campaign for power, the whole purpose of which was rearmament and the tearing up of Versailles, was publicly supported by Directors of the Czechoslovak Skoda works, then a subsidiary of the great French armaments firm of Schneider-

is therefore freed for distribution (to British shareholders) on account of the current year's working," reports Unilever. The ordinary dividend is stepped up from 5 to 10 per cent.

There is nothing, of course, to the smallest degree improper in this, so far as either the British or Dutch ends of Unilever are concerned. But it does seem odd that the Nazis, in their tenderness for the shareholders in occupied Holland, should deliberately, if indirectly, provide over a million pounds for the shareholders in Britain.

Creusot. It is believed that Hitler obtained arms secretly from Skoda.

* * * * *

Despite the condemnation by the League of Nations of Japan's outrage against China in 1931, British armament firms exported 5,361,450 small-arm cartridges, 4,909 cwt. of high explosives, and other explosives to the value of £40,239 to Japan for use against China during 1932. Schneider-Creusot of France (another member of the League) had sent by March, impartially to China and Japan, 200 pieces of heavy naval artillery, ten million rounds of naval ammunition, twelve million rounds of machine-gun ammunition, and two million shells for light calibre artillery. One day in November Japan gave an order for the entire stock of munitions in the factories and warehouses of Schneider-Creusot to be shipped to her immediately: and orders of such magnitude followed that shops normally reserved for tractor wheels and locomotive parts were converted into munition shops. At a British works, according to a statement of Mr. Morgan Jones in the House of Commons "armaments were being prepared in one part of the building for Japan and in another for China. By an unfortunate chance, the representatives of the Governments arrived at the factory at the same time and were shown into the same room. There they began to discuss the charges made by the firm for their munitions, with the result that they agreed to a joint ultimatum asking for a reduction in prices." After the League condemnation, Mr. Matspoka travelled to Britain and became the special guest of the Metropolitan-Vickers Electrical Company, and subsequently had an hour's interview with the Chairman of Imperial Chemicals—potential manufacturers of poison gas.

* * * * *

"The economy policy of the Liberal Government from 1908 onwards had given the armament firms a severe blow. From 1908 to 1910 the dividends of Vickers and Armstrong fell from fifteen per cent. to ten per cent. The *Naval Annual* published at the beginning of 1909 recorded that 'the shipbuilding industry has passed through one of the worst years ever known.' Unless Government orders could be increased, there was every prospect of the dividends falling still further.

"Orders for warships would not come unless a feeling of insecurity were created. A feeling of insecurity would not come without a war-scare. The war-scare was started.

"On March 3rd 1909, Mr. Mulliner, manager of the Coventry Ordnance Works, convinced the Admiralty that he had private information of such importance that the Cabinet was justified in

taking the unprecedented step of receiving him to hear his story. He told the Cabinet that he had reliable information that the German Government was secretly accelerating her naval programme. The Cabinet accepted his story.

"Mr. Asquith and Mr. McKenna hurried to the House of Commons and announced that Germany would have seventeen Dreadnoughts by March 1912, instead of the nine publicly announced in her naval programme. Mr. Balfour, who had also been admitted into Mr. Mulliner's confidence, went further. He declared that Germany would have twenty-five, or at the lowest estimate twenty-one, Dreadnoughts by that date. The House became panic-stricken.

"It immediately voted an increase of naval expenditure of £4,603,002. Of this, £4,409,502 went to the private armament firms. But even this was not regarded as enough. The war-scare, once started, was fanned to flame by the nationalist and patriotic Press, and by politicians who demanded still more Dreadnoughts. The Conservatives won a by-election at Peckham by a sensational majority on the cry 'We want eight, and we won't wait.' Before the end of the year the Government responded to the popular clamour and ordered four more Dreadnoughts.

"When March 1912 came, Mr. Mulliner's story proved to be without justification. Germany had only the nine Dreadnoughts which she had foreshadowed. But the scare had secured large contracts for the British armament firms. Naval rivalries had been revived. The dividends of Vickers and Armstrong had shot up again. 'I find, in the year before the scare, Messrs. Vickers' profits amounting to £424,000,' said Mr. Philip Snowden in a speech delivered in the House of Commons on March 17th 1914. 'Two years after that they were nearly double the amount. Every year since the success of their intrigue their profits have gone up—£474,000; £544,000; £745,000; £872,000.'

"Mr. Mulliner, however, deserves some sympathy. He was treated most ungenerously by the Government. The firm of which he was manager, the Coventry Ordnance Company, received none of the orders which he was so instrumental in inspiring, although its parent firm, Cammell Laird, got one of the first contracts. It was Mr. Mulliner's indignation against the Government for overlooking his firm which led him to give away the secret of the scare. Shortly afterwards he was pensioned off from the management of his company."

* * * * *

In 1907, a German armaments firm asked its agent in Paris "to use all his power" to get inserted in "the most widely read

of the French newspapers " a fabrication to the effect that France had decided to double the number of its machine-guns. The object was to scare the German Ministry of War into ordering more machine-guns from the German armaments firm.

* * * * *

According to the *Observer* of May 27th 1933, the *Journal des Débats*, controlled by Wendel, President of the Comité des Forges (the great French heavy industry combine, itself dominated by Schneider-Creusot), was urging that France should give up trying to persuade Germany to disarm and that, instead, France should re-arm in order to maintain the Treaty of Versailles—and to increase the Schneider-Creusot profits.

* * * * *

In 1929 a Mr. Shearer, an American publicity man, brought an action " against the largest shipbuilding corporations in America for 255,655 dollars which he claimed were due to him for services rendered at the Naval Conference in Geneva in 1927 in successfully preventing any effective disarmament from being realised. The three firms were the Bethlehem Shipbuilding Corporation, the Newport News Shipbuilding and Drydock Co., and the American Brown Boveri Corporation.

" Mr. Shearer admitted that he had already been paid 51,230 dollars, but insisted upon his right to the balance on account of influencing orders for battleships which would never have been required if the Disarmament Conference had proved successful.

" This case caused such a sensation that President Hoover instructed the Attorney-General to make an enquiry. Faced by this prospect, Mr. Eugene Grace wrote, in his capacity as president of the Bethlehem Shipbuilding Corporation, to President Hoover, acknowledging that he and Mr. C. M. Schwartz, chairman of the Board of Directors of the Bethlehem Steel Corporation, had engaged Mr. Shearer as an ' observer ' at the Naval Disarmament Conference at a fee of 25,000 dollars.

" The activities of Mr. Shearer have been described by Mr. Charles A. Beard, in *The Navy : Defence or Portent*, in detail. They may be summarised in this way :

" 1. Whatever the terms of the ' oral contract ' under which he was hired, he was notoriously engaged at the Geneva Arms Conference in violent anti-British propaganda, in doing his best to defeat arms limitation, in entertaining naval officers and American newspaper correspondents, in stimulating ' the marine industry, both for the navy and the merchant marine ' (to use his own words), in sending out literature designed to discredit

American advocates of peace, and in inserting his 'publicity' in reputable American newspapers, such as the *New York Times*, under the guise of news.

" 2. He maintained a lobby in Washington for the purpose of influencing support for cruiser and merchant-marine Bills coming before Congress.

" 3. He prepared political articles for publication in newspapers and magazines.

" 4. He lectured before patriotic societies and other civic organisations.

" 5. He employed 'experts' and other workers, whose exact duties remain unknown.

" 6. He addressed the American Legion, Chambers of Commerce, and similar organisations."

* * * * *

Here are the principal clauses in an agreement between Belgian, Austrian and German firms, mentioned in the Reichstag in 1913 :

" The traffic of arms, respecting the deliveries of remodelled machine-guns or carbine rifles for Russia, Japan, China and Abyssinia, will be carried on for mutual benefit, and the estimated earnings will be distributed to the various groups according to a predetermined scale. The two groups of factories will give each other as much mutual help as possible, in order that every factory may be able to manufacture the required arms in the cheapest and quickest manner.

" To this end, figures and dimension tables of the desired model under production, the required measuring instruments and calibres, shall be handed over at their respective cost price, in so far as possible, or lent gratis. The price of the arms to be delivered is to be at all times determined mutually by the groups.

" In order to carry out the fundamental views expressed earlier, a common chest will be established in which every factory which manufactures, markets or delivers rifles and carbines on its own initiative, shall be obliged to pay a fee of fifteen francs per weapon."

* * * * *

Before the war of 1914-1918, the Harvey United Steel Company, an armour-plate combine, was presided over by Mr. Albert Vickers, managing director of Vickers-Maxim. On its directorate were representatives of British firms, German (including Krupp), French (including Schneider), Italian and American. Both

Krupp and Schneider were financially interested in the great Russian Poutiloff factories; Krupp was a partner in the Skoda works, then owned by Austria; Vickers owned half the capital of the Meuteron Factories in Japan; and the British firms represented had interests in Spain and Portugal.

* * * * *

Between the war of 1914-1918 and the war of 1939-194-, Schneider-Creusot of France (with which Vickers was connected through their joint subsidiary, Vickers-Schneider) controlled Skoda of Czechoslovakia, which itself had works or subsidiaries in Poland and Rumania. Its dividends rose from 5 per cent. in 1920 to 28½ per cent. in 1930.

* * * * *

Between the two wars, Vickers-Armstrong of Britain was associated with Mitsui, the most powerful armament combine in Japan, and controlled one of its units. It had a subsidiary in Italy, controlled a Spanish firm, had factories in Rumania and holdings in Poland, and held valuable shares, through its Aviation Company, in the Dutch Fokker firm and in the Junkers Company of Dessau. It was linked, as we have seen, with Schneider, and had works in Canada, New Zealand, and Ireland. It had intimate connections with the Services, for six of the directors of Vickers and Vickers-Armstrong were ex-officers of high position in the Army and Navy, the Chairman having formerly been Chief of Staff at British Army Headquarters in France. It was "all mixed up" with High Finance, national and international: the Chairman was also Chairman of the Anglo-International Bank, the Bank of Rumania, and the London Committee of the Ottoman Bank, as well as managing partner of Glyn, Mills and a director of great insurance companies. Among other banks represented on the directorate were the Chartered Bank of India, Australia, and China, the English and New York Trust Company, and the Broadway Finance and Investment Company. Finally "the total number of directorates held by the fifteen men on the Boards of Vickers and Vickers-Armstrong was 127. That gave an average of more than seven each. They included directorates covering, in addition to finance, interests in steel, electricity, railways, coal, shipbuilding, shipping, nickel, newspapers, etc. One cannot read the list without being impressed by the intimate connection between armament manufacture and the general control of industry."

* * * * *

During the Russo-Japanese war, Zaharoff, who had merged his company with Vickers, urged the Czar to get his armaments

made in Britain : far safer than to let the Russian workers make them, for mightn't they use them for revolution instead of for their master's war ? Zaharoff was successful in getting the order for Vickers. Vickers was a British firm : Britain was the ally of Japan, with whom the Czar was fighting. Similarly, Zaharoff got for Beardmore, the Glasgow branch of Vickers, a contract, in conjunction with a French firm, to build a dockyard and cannon factories in Reval.

" From now onwards Zaharoff went forward unchallenged as the universal armament provider. His British and French firms became linked in an international trust with the leading firms of Germany, America and Italy. They sent arms all over the world. It was only the Great War which broke this international organisation into its national sections. Then the peoples proceeded to slaughter each other by the million with the instruments which Zaharoff and his colleagues had so impartially provided.

" The World War was Zaharoff's climax of power. He became virtual master of the munitions supply of the Allies, and at the same time the products of concerns in which he was interested were being used by Germany, Austria, Turkey and Bulgaria to shatter the troops of the Allies. Zaharoff developed from a mere armament producer and salesman to the status of a great political power. . . . When there was a possibility of negotiations through the intervention of the United States in 1917, he was consulted. His view is recorded in the diary of Lord Bertie, the British Ambassador in Paris, under the date June 25th 1917. The entry is concise and pointed : ' Zaharoff is all for continuing the war *jusqu'au bout* [right to the very end]. '"

* * * * *

The War in the Gran Chaco between Bolivia and Paraguay from 1932 to 1934 will be remembered. Mr. Eden spoke in 1934 of " the senseless loss of life, the utterly unjustifiable imposition of human suffering, and the meaningless destruction of the best resources in men and material of these two countries." A League of Nations Commission reported that, as neither country produced arms or war materials, the war could be carried on at all only by the supply of armaments from abroad.

" Mr. Eppstein, of the League of Nations Union, publicly declared in an International Congress of League of Nations' Societies in May 1934 that it was known that, while the dispute between Bolivia and Paraguay was brewing, the agent of the most important British Armament Firm had secured an order for £1,500,000 worth of arms. At the same time, he declared,

another agent of the Firm was working with equal success in Paraguay.

"Mr. Eppstein's statement was never contradicted. And after the fighting had begun, and while the delegates of the British Government were seeking with their colleagues on the Council of the League to stop the war, British Firms were still supplying the belligerents with great quantities of arms. Mr. Runciman admitted in the House of Commons in 1933 that five tanks had been exported from Great Britain to Bolivia during the previous year.

"Mr. Vyvyan Adams, M.P., said that in twelve months prior to the end of 1934 the British Arms Firms had sold goods to the value of more than £250,000 to the two parties.

"During the full period of the war Vickers-Armstrong alone sold arms to Bolivia to the value of £425,158.

"It was further reported by journalists on the spot that in both belligerent countries there were agents of virtually every Arms Firm in Europe and the United States. These agents were tirelessly canvassing the authorities for orders, and, no doubt, many of them were quite as successful as their British colleagues."*

* * * * *

And this is how the Manager of the Foreign Department of the Remington Arms Company, Inc., of the United States, wrote to his agent in Chile in 1933: "I can imagine," he said, "you are playing both the Bolivian and Paraguayan Ministers for anything that might materialise," and then he continued:

"About the agitation for an embargo on arms and ammunition from the United States,† you can well appreciate, when this first reached our ears from Washington, *we immediately got busy*, and we are thoroughly satisfied from the reports that came back to us there will be no embargo from this country. From what we hear the idea originated with the State Department, but is not receiving any serious consideration in Congress or by the President. We reached some mighty high officials in the Government and feel confident nothing will prevent the execution of any business we can get.

"There is not a chance of any legislation going through without our knowing of it being started, and the steps we have taken will, we feel sure, enable us to get the opportunity to fully present our arguments, which will kill any of these crazy ideas.

* Noel-Baker, *op. cit.*, p. 219.

† Both the League and the U.S. Government were considering an embargo on both belligerents.

"Hoping you are well and that the New Year will bring greater rewards than in the past . . ."

* * * * *

These examples are, perhaps, sufficient. Which is better or saner : to hate the ordinary people of Germany and the oppressed and starving millions of Japan, who want nothing better than food and work and love and a little pleasure, and whom we know in our more decent moments to be our brothers and sisters overwhelmed by a common misfortune : or to work for the ending of capitalism, which, if not the root of the misfortune, for that is deeper still, is the soil in which greed and aggression, the universal enemy of mankind but the guest of all our hearts, is nourished into a lethal fruitfulness, when otherwise it might slowly wither, and perhaps, for it is good to hope, even altogether die ?

SHORT BOOK LIST

This is a list of no more than eleven books, which will help the reader who has been interested, but to whom the subject is new, to carry his study of the question a stage further, with a view to forming his own judgment. Unfortunately some of these books are out of print, owing to the present difficulties of the book trade: but some are in print, and others can no doubt be obtained from any good public library.

1. *History*

H. G. Wells's *Outline of History* (published by Cassell at 10s. 6d.) is essential. Or his *Short History of the World* (published by Watts at 2s. 6d.).

Side by side with one of these should be read *An Outline of Man's History*, by Patrick Gordon Walker—a book of no more than 250 pages, and published by the N.C.L.C. Publishing Society, of Tillicoultry, Scotland, at 2s. 6d. Gordon Walker gives a more "economic" interpretation of history than Wells: the two books balance one another.

2. *Imperialism*

The best book on which to start is H. N. Brailsford's *The War of Steel and Gold*, published by Bell at 4s. 6d. It is exceedingly "easy reading." After that J. A. Hobson's *Imperialism: A Study* (published by Allen and Unwin at 8s. 6d.) should be read. When these have been mastered, the reader should tackle Lenin's *Imperialism* (published by Lawrence and Wishart at 1s. 6d.), which is indispensable. It is a book of only 115 small pages, and is not really "difficult"; but its compression, and the mass of statistics which it incorporates, give it a formidable appearance. It is important that this book should be thoroughly mastered, and two or three readings are advisable.

When the analysis of Imperialism has been thoroughly understood, Peter Drucker's *The End of Economic Man* (published by Heinemann at 8s. 6d.) may usefully be read, as representing a very different point of view.

3. "*The Private Manufacture of Armaments : a Model of Capitalism*"

Fenner Brockway's *The Bloody Traffic* (published by Gollancz at 3s. 6d.) is, like Brailsford's book, very "easy reading"—it can be got through in a couple of hours. It should be supplemented by Philip Noel-Baker's great classic *The Private Manufacture of Armaments* (published by Gollancz at 18s.)—a book of over 500 large pages.

4. *India*

The most useful book for the general reader who is interested not so much in India itself as in the considerations suggested in Chapter VI is H. N. Brailsford's *Rebel India* (published by Gollancz at 2s. 6d.).

5. *Socialism*

The two best books with which to start are perhaps John Strachey's twopenny pamphlet *Why You Should be a Socialist* (Gollancz), and, written from a very different angle, Sir Richard Acland's *What It Will be Like* (Gollancz, 3s. 6d.).

NOTE TO THE READER

Any reader specially interested by this book is asked to write to the author at 14, Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, London.

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